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Denice Hicks

A. L. ROWSE

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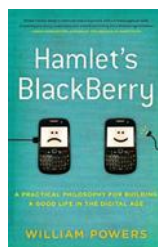
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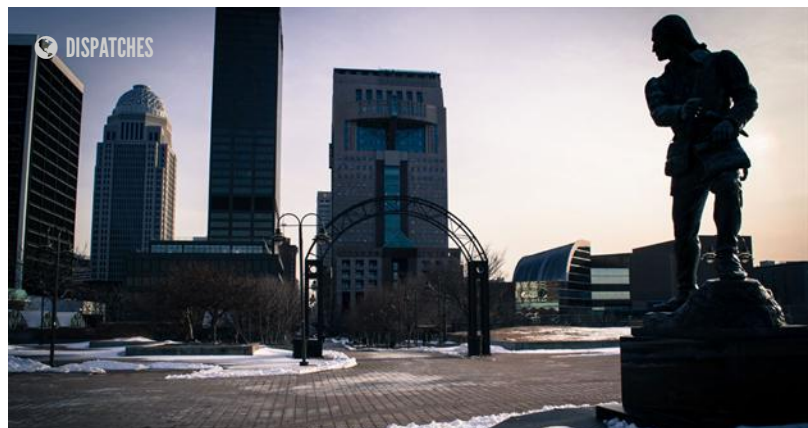
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A Word From the Editor ...

Shakespeare in our Park

My earliest childhood memories of anything remotely related to the theatre are from Mr. Darling's English class at Mount Washington Junior High. Rural Kentucky: 1977, maybe '78. My recollections of him pacing back and forth in front of the class, swinging that wooden cane of his are so vivid—especially when he whacked it on someone's desk or on the wall or on most anything else he could reach with it. And the sounds of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* scratching their way around a vinyl LP and escaping through the tiny speaker in the side of the player provided the background noise to Mr. Darling's theatrics. *It was a brilliant way to keep our attention.*

How could I have known then that within a decade, circumstances would have this small town boy (our town's population was 1900, max!) living in downtown London, haunting through the West End Theatre District, and visiting Stratford-upon-Avon?

And just as fast, I was stateside again, finished with college, and attending my first southern Shakespeare in the Park.

As I scribble these words, it's a cool, late-summer evening in downtown Music City. The groovy Christmas tree-esk lights hanging from poles have the stage and seating areas aglow. It's Saturday, September 13, 2014, intermission at Shakespeare in the Park's *As You Like It*. Sitting in the Centennial Park Bandshell, I'm remembering being in this park during that first summer...well over twenty years ago. Wow: it's been that long.

Even before we published our first issue, I knew there would be an issue focusing on the Theatre. And once it started to form, I was not surprised that so much of it involved the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. The Bard and his works have been such an important part of my thoughts and experiences. It's not fair to all of the other wonderful theatre happenings in and around Nashville: I know. I've lived in Nashville since 1991, and my wife and I have been constant theatregoers—as *schedules and budgets have allowed*. Flip through our back issues, and you'll unearth many stories that involve many theaters and productions throughout Middle Tennessee. We'll continue that habit: promise!

There are plenty of people around the stage right now who have been attending this annual event much longer than I, specifically Denice

Hicks—the Nashville Shakespeare Festival's artistic director. We were thrilled when Denice agreed to be our In Depth cover story for this issue.

...and we're equally thrilled that she has stuck with us over the many months that it has taken us to assemble this issue! We are here because of the encouragement and support of so many people and organizations: our subscribers, our writers, our poets, and our friends.

In our last issue, we first introduced our readers to our new partner: Literary Publicist

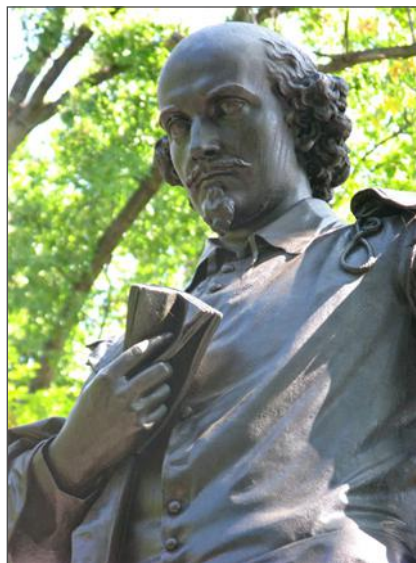
Julie Schoerke, founder of JKSCcommunications. Julie and her folks are some of the best friends a writer or poet ever had. *Trust me on that one, gentle reader!*

We are not yet selling adverts, officially, but we are showing our appreciation to some area artists and supporters in the form of some cross-promotion. Of course, you'll see JKSCcommunications. (Thanks, Julie, for everything!) And there are our friends over at *Chapter 16*, a service of Humanities Tennessee, whose purpose is to provide education

in the humanities to Tennesseans. And you'll learn about Nashville photographer Jeff Frazier in this issue. All of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival photos throughout this issue came from his camera, and we couldn't have put this issue together without his support!

We are always adding new members to our team, and since our last issue, we've added two new columnists and one new correspondent—our first foreign correspondent! Molly McCaffrey is a writer and educator up at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. She joins us as our new literary film columnist. And Randy O'Brien is our new audio book columnist. He comes from a long career in radio at MTSU. And Canadian Jennifer Palley reports in from Sweden and the Aurora Borealis that shines over that country's snowy mountains.

I hope you'll enjoy this issue as much as we've enjoyed the process of getting it to you. Stick around: *lots of great stuff coming up in 2015!* ☐



Above: Statue of William Shakespeare on the literary row in Central Park, New York City.

A Word From Poetry Editor Alvin Knox ...

Pole Vaulting in Louisville: or, Finding Metaphor

The poet Tony Hoagland, in *Real Sofistikashun: Essays on Poetry and Craft* (Graywolf Press, 2006), stated that “metaphor is the raw uranium of poetry.” He further stated that creating metaphor, though something poets do regularly, is a mysterious process: “It is a mystery hand going into a black mystery box. The head says, ‘Fetch me a metaphor, hand,’ and the hand disappears under a cloth. A moment later, the hand reappears, metaphor on its extended palm.” To some degree, or perhaps I should say, in some circumstances, this description is figuratively accurate, but there are also times when the metaphor, instead of being created in service to the poem, stares us blankly in the face and challenges us to write the poem that will unravel its mysteries and intricacies.

I very recently went to Louisville, Kentucky to participate in the scoring of AP Literature and Composition exams. The first day I was there, I wandered through the downtown entertainment plaza called *4th Street Live*, where, instead of the band I expected on a Saturday evening, there was a pole vaulting competition in progress. I found myself instantly intrigued by the incongruity between my expectations of the venue and the nature of the event being held there. As I watched, however, I became more involved with the action. Part of the appeal was the pole vaulting itself, but more enticing was the element of performance, of the personalities displayed by the participants, their personal reactions to a jump made or missed and their public reactions to the crowd of spectators. After just a couple rounds of jumps, I had picked a favorite to cheer for, one of the older competitors, and one who, though obviously an underdog in the competition, played to the audience well. As the event progressed, I found increasing admiration for the determination, athleticism, and focus of the vaulters. I was also becoming increasingly aware of my own reaction. Why would a middle-aged, relatively non-athletic person such as myself be so enthralled with this event? Well, because I’m a poet, of course, and the depth of what I was witnessing—the intensity, the beauty, the out-of-placeness—smacked of possibility. I was watching the unfolding of a complex metaphor, and I sensed it.

Actually, I was seeing half of a metaphor. Whether I was observing what would become the tenor or the vehicle, the object (the real focus of the poem) or the image (that which transforms the object), was not clear; in fact, it remains unclear, for the poem is yet to be written. Given my general lack of involvement in all things sport-ish—when my roommate in Louisville announced one evening he was going to watch “the ballgame,” I had to inquire about the nature of the game, a basketball playoff match, and the competitors, the names of whose teams I’ve already forgotten—I suspect it will be the vehicle. What I am lacking, then, is the tenor, the true subject of the metaphor. Due to the complexity of the event I witnessed, I also suspect that I will be creating an extended or controlling metaphor, as opposed to a simple, quick metaphor within an otherwise unrelated context. Time and opportunity will tell.

Though the images of the competition I saw are provocative in and of themselves, I’m also aware that the language associated with pole vaulting may affect my choices. Jargon associated with many specialized endeavors, occupations, and fields of study can both suggest and limit possibilities. When your knowledge of a subject is as restricted as mine is about pole vaulting, a Google search is in order. Terms such as “pole” and “box,” along with others like “approach,” “extension,” “take off,” and “fly-away,” offer facile sexual innuendos, while expressions like “bar,” “mark,” and “standards” might be applied to any number of competitive enterprises. “The pit,” that place where the athlete lands, and the “sudden death” nature of the competition carry obvious connotations. The science of pole vaulting, the conversion of kinetic-to-potential-to-kinetic energies and the double-pendulum motion of a well-executed vault, might also offer potential for word



play. However, word play alone does not make a poem, at least not a good one. In fact, it’s often a hallmark of naïve or weak poetry when it is the main feature of the poem. Conversely, well executed word play, as with form and line breaks, is only a part of, and is subservient to, the greater context and meaning, and it often plays nearly invisibly across the surface of the text.

So, having done my homework and being unwilling to force a poem into existence, I wait. I don’t know what I’m waiting for, perhaps an analogous situation, a rhythm that reminds me of the vaulter’s sprint, the mental silence necessary for some long embedded memory to find expression and clarification in the language and images of my pole vaulting experience.

The point is, perchance metaphor isn’t really all that mysterious. The poet, all people of an artistic mindset, in fact, may possess a talent for observation and correlation which puts us on the alert for fragments of metaphor all the time, both those we immediately recognize and those we don’t, and we somehow tag them for use before storing them in the recesses of our minds. Then, when an apt opportunity presents itself, Hoagland’s “mystery hand,” our own subconscious, reaches into the “black mystery box” of memory and presents us the perfect metaphor, the figurative compression that propels our poems heavenward, the double-pendulum vault for and over the bar. ☐

TOP: Photo by Luke Seward

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

Mercy

by Bill Brown

--compassion, grace, pity, charity, forgiveness...

It still exists in human hearts
like a storefront church
at the strip mall. *Do you believe*
mercy asks, beyond the busy-list,
scribbled on a folded note housed
between driver's license and debit card.
Yet, even on rainy nights when
taillights drag the street, someone
feeds the homeless, someone calls
the ambulance, someone sits beside
the dying, monitoring a pulse.
These someone's have leftovers
in the fridge, stale bread for sparrows,
a child at home waiting. They're
not posing for the camera, but defecate
like cover girls and rock stars.

Let us pray:

Dear anonymous One who art
somewhere, bless the merciful
and their thank-less mercies.
Or—is it possible that, like my
father taught, kindness and duty
birth their own rewards, that in
the over-crowded classroom
of the heart, compassion like
a cabbage grows from a seed.
Dear Jesus, Gautama, Ganesh,
Adonai, Allah, help us remove
the obstacles to poverty, helplessness,
no-place-ness. Amid the red lights,
the bank drafts, the prescribed ordinary
greed, let us be kind. Help us
take a sick neighbor soup.

Music

by Bill Brown

Today music spouting from a car
is as obscure as most passing life,

not a catch-phrase or chorus that transports
you to a father's shower, a childhood campfire.

And a neighbor's grief, often carried
in her eyes, or how one hand fingers

the other's knuckles like prayer beads—
too often lost in your own father's death,

mother's dementia, how at the last visit,
she forgot the name she once gave you.

Oh little sun, flying in the Milky Way,
are you as busy as a single bacterium

busting with purpose under the forest loam?
Mail arrived today addressed to occupant—

there's comfort being an unknown citizen,
walking the lake trail as anonymous

as a wood poppy in need of rain,
to know life can turn a curve

without a road sign, and that's
the only tune you have to sing.

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

Looking Toward Dawn

by KB Ballentine

And so many stars! The sky seems stretched like an old black cloth. –Mary Oliver

Stars glitter in the heavens tonight,
Leo's heart paling with Virgo's rise,
and I think of you – this time without regret.

I've shut the drawers –
all we did with all we wanted.
Shadows swallow
what's left of its light, sweet lavender.

Each star is a wish I made for you –
to have you, to hold you, to keep you.

And the stars scatter in patterns
of light that spin through the seasons,
suddenly dazzling then dimming.

I search the sky, see Centaurus galloping
the horizon. I think of you and let you go.

Message to the Writer

by KB Ballentine

In the cool quiet of early dawn
before even twilight changes to milky gray,
open your eyes. Gaze a moment at the ceiling.
Breathe once, twice, then slide
out of the warm burrow of sheets.
Stand at the window and examine the shadows,
what light can be found.
Face the darkness.
Stretch arms overhead – muscles pulling, straining
for day's adventure.
Let go of your plans for the day save one:
Write.

Accrued Interest

by Elsie Mosher

Memories are the dividends of age
Old bones protest
At thoughts of travel
And roads no longer beckon.
I seek a quiet place
And remember where I've been.

Those sunny days in Spain
Where shepherds tended flocks
On distant hills
And windmills turned in wait
For Don Quixote on his steed.

We rode through endless miles
Of olive groves
And traced Hemingway's routes
In that civil war.

We visited the tomb
Where Franco's bones are laid
Saw flamenco dancers beat
Their wild tattoo
In old Madrid.

Now age restricts
And time grows short
Treasures of memory remain
Storehoused in my heart.

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

Blue

by Ray Zimmerman

Accelerate toward Speed of Light.
Giggle as incoming waves shift blue.
Avoid quantum singularities where
Even electromagnetic rays bend.

Giggle as incoming waves shift blue.
Vision brackets man in blue coat.
Even electromagnetic rays bend.
He flies a blue kite, drops blue crumbs.

Vision brackets man in blue coat.
Growing heat invigorates storms.
He flies a blue kite, drops blue crumbs
On seas where blueish men fish.

Growing heat invigorates storms.
You approach a blue planet
On seas where blueish men fish
For blue salmon served with squid.

Avoid quantum singularities where
You approach a blue planet
For blue salmon served with squid.
Accelerate toward speed of light.

Salvador Dali Meets Gertrude Stein

by Ray Zimmerman

Nebulous nebulae nebulae nebulae nebulous
Negotiate nebulous nebulae, oversee
weather cloudy and serene. Serene sirens
negotiate nebulous nebulae with squad cars
of intergalactic police as we negotiate
a tapestry of weather symbols and barrel staves
in water inhabited by golden goldfish and
copper piranhas. Copper cop car piranhas
eat us out of house and home, house
and home house house home house home.

Ascend cirrus cloud cloud cloud cirrus stairs.
Find no piranhas here and chum for sharks.
Catch any sharks, chum? Chum chum chum
for tiger tiger burning bright, tiger sharks
pursue us on this journey with no destination
to love but the question itself of who
ate the last shark steak in the refrigerator.
Shark steak steak shark steak shark.

Man-eating shark has a stake in this tale and
has a tail to tell it with like Ferlinghetti's dog,
if indeed it is the shark that eats the man and
not the man eating the shark stake, the SOB
took the last one. Gnash your teeth you
sharkless humans and humorless sharks.
Gnash gnash teeth teeth gnash human
teeth gnash on shark flesh irony.

Want to See Your Poetry Here? Submit Your Work for Review

What We Print: What does it mean for a poet or reader to live a life of fine arts in the United States, especially in the 21st century? Where can poets and readers go, either alone or in groups? What do they choose to write and read about? Which experiences make it from their lives to the pages? How are poets engaged, entertained, and provoked? And in turn, how do those poets engage, entertain, and provoke via their words and phrases? These are some of the questions our editors seek to answer when selecting poetry for *2nd & Church*. We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Send up to six poems.

Payment: We would love to be able to pay our contributors, and perhaps one day, we will. For now, contributors will receive two copies of the issue in which their work appears.

Submissions: Simultaneous, Multiple, & Otherwise. We are okay with simultaneous submissions. If you don't hear from us within one month, you're free to send your work elsewhere. We do ask that you tell us if the manuscript is a simultaneous submission and notify us if the work is accepted for publication elsewhere. Submissions **MUST** be in English and previously unpublished.

Manuscript Expectations: Shipments, Rejections, Response Times, and More: Write your full name and address on the outside of the envelope. Address submissions to the "Poetry Editor." Ship your work in a large enough envelope to include your manuscript pages, unfolded. Send to the following address: *2nd & Church*, P.O. Box 198156, Nashville, TN 37129-8156

Never send your unsolicited manuscript via certified mail. Certified mail is held for signature at the post office. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (S.A.S.E.) with all manuscripts. Business-size. Use a forever stamp on the envelope. Allow two months before querying. Don't send your only copy. We cannot be held responsible for any manuscript that is delayed, lost, or damaged in shipment.

Preparing Your Manuscript: 8 1/2 x 11 paper. (White paper, please.). Typed. Use an ink- or laser-jet printer. Single-spaced for poetry. 12-point type. Black ink. Times New Roman font style/type. Courier or New Courier is okay, as well. A one-inch margin at the top, bottom, left, and right. Your personal contact information at the top of the manuscript's first page, including your name, address, phone number, word count, and email address. Also, if you have a personal or professional website, please include the URL. Starting with page two, either in the header or footer, number the pages consecutively. Instead of the title, many poets include their last name. Your choice. Use paper clips, not staples. Do not include an electronic copy of your piece. Hard copy only, please. Don't spend a great deal of time on the cover letter: allow your work to speak for you. If you include one, be sure and write a two- or three-sentence author's bio note. (Use the third person, please.)

Why It's Important to Support your Local Indie Bookstore

By Julie Schoerke

Within two years, scary insect-looking things are going to be delivering your books to your house via Amazon drones. Amazon sells books as lost leaders—the company actually loses money on selling books—in order to capture the entire book business. Jeff Bezos is looking to have publishing and distribution streamlined through his company, which in a way could become a type of censorship if there isn't competition.

What will it be like to have these weird drones flying around in our personal space? What will it be like to only have books published that are curated by one source?

The "real" price of a book is what you pay at a bookstore. The booksellers aren't marking the prices up; they're charging what it costs, truly, to provide their customers with a book that someone can walk into a store and touch, feel, and smell—allowing authors and publishers to make a decent living with creative freedom.

The height of rudeness? Going into a bookstore, browsing, and then telling the sales clerk at the counter that you're going home to order their book on Amazon.

It's worth a few extra bucks to buy a book at fair market value to ensure that you'll still have the literary heart-beat of your local community to walk into whenever you like.

Bookstores bring in interesting authors and programming, and the people in them actually read; you can get great recommendations for books that you'll love as the staff gets to know your taste. Algorithms scientifically designed to pop up on Amazon and recommend books that you may like are about as accurate as those used by an online dating site to help you find your perfect "match," that special someone with a wife beater t-shirt on and grammatical errors in his profile.

Independent bookstores: Use 'em or lose 'em.

What are some of the best bookstores in the country? How lucky we are that many of them are in the American South! Why? Because more people buy and read books in our part of the country than in any other, which breeds delightful, truly wonderful, and wondrous bookstores.

For an up-to-date list of bookstores in our region by state, visit the following site: <http://stars.authorsroundthesouth.com/venue/statesort/>

Looking for a new twist on tourism? How about taking a bookstore vacation? I've known

people who do this. Plan a driving trip with stops at each independent bookstore that catches your fancy on this list, and you'll learn a lot more about the communities in which you're visiting than doing just about any other type of tourism activity. The history of the city, the graciousness of the local folks, and the quirkiness that makes a town's personality can all be found in a bookstore.

I visit bookstores everywhere I go. Some of my favorite include:

* East Side Story in East Nashville (<http://eastsidestorytn.com/>). Owner Chuck Beard is a book lover who supports local authors, an underserved market in Nashville.

* Fairytale Books in East Nashville (<http://www.fairytalesbookstore.com/>) How can a bookstore that has ice cream for breakfast

events not make the list?!

* Parnassus Books in the Green Hills area of Nashville (<http://www.parnassus-books.net/>)

* Litchfield Books in Pawleys Island, South Carolina, features amazing lunches with authors (<http://litchfieldbooks.com/>).

* Square Books, Publishers Weekly's 2013 bookstore of the year in Oxford, Mississippi, is home to Thacker Mountain Radio every Thursday night during the Ole Miss school year (<http://www.squarebooks.com/>).

* Pass Christian Bookstore makes the list for its indomitable spirit of staying open in the aftermath of Katrina (<http://www.passchristianbooks.com/>) and Reed's for the same reason (<http://reedsms.com/>) in Louisiana.

* Dog Ear Books (<http://www.dogearbooks.com/>) in Atlanta and FoxTale Book Shoppe (<http://www.foxtalebookshoppe.com/>) for their over-the-top fun events.

Nobody knows books better or more fiercely fights for bookstores to survive and debut authors to be discovered than Kelly Justice at Fountain Bookstore. If she's featuring a debut novelist, she offers a bonus to those who come out for the event—the chance of picking out an advance reader copy of another book for free that the publisher has sent her (www.fountainbookstore.com/). Bookin' It in North Carolina gets my vote as one of the most creative bookstores with incredibly nice owners – a bookstore on wheels that comes to you. (www.bookin-it.com). And there are dozens more that I could name!

Emerging authors and readers need bookstores. Help keep 'em in business. ☺



Welcome to 2nd & Church

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Our mission

Our goal is to be inclusive of many different types of writers and writing: creative nonfiction, technical writing, literary fiction, W4C, poetry, translation, songwriting, and commercial fiction.

2nd & Church explores the creative writing life. What does it mean for a writer, poet, or reader to live a life of fine arts? Where can writers, poets, and readers gather? What do you write and read about? Which experiences make it from their lives to the pages? How are they engaged, entertained, and provoked? And in turn, how do they engage, entertain, and provoke readers? These are some of the questions we seek to answer.

JKSCommunications

JKSCommunications is a literary publicity firm serving our literary communities out of Nashville, New York, Chicago, and Denver. 2nd & Church is a proud partner with these hard-working promoters of the written word. Learn all about them at:

www.jkscommunications.com/

Submission guidelines

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts, but the expectation is that the work will support our mission. Send up to six poems and/or about 1,000 words of prose. For work over 1,000 words, query first. We will consider novel excerpts, but the selection of material must be able to stand alone – be self-contained. We prefer to assign book reviews and criticism; please don't submit those to us.

And in general, we don't publish essays on craft.

Please visit us online at www.2ndandchurch.com for complete writing and submission guidelines.

LEFT: Photo by Terry Price

A Few Words with *Othello* Director Jon Royal

Jon Royal is a director, actor, teaching artist, and technician from Nashville, Tennessee. He has directed numerous productions including *Passing Strange*, *The Colored Museum*, *Once on This Island*, *Hairspray*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Conference of the Birds*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Butterfly*, *Hanging Mary*, *Proof*, *Jungal Book*, and *Julius Caesar: The High School Experience*. He is a past winner of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Regional Student Directing Award. He has assistant directed numerous productions and served as Tennessee Repertory Theatre's directing intern during the 2004-05 season. He has appeared as an actor in shows produced by NSF, Nashville Children's Theatre, Tennessee Repertory Theatre, and Actor's Bridge Ensemble. Jon has also been working with youth here and abroad for over twenty-four years. He is currently a teaching artist for TPAC Education's ArtSmart and Disney Musicals in the Schools programs, Nashville Children's Theatre, NSF, and Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles' Will Power to Youth program.

A little over two decades ago, the NSF first staged *Othello*. Last year, the NSF presented the play once more at Belmont University featuring former Tennessee Titan Eddie George in the title role. Jon Royal made his festival directorial debut with *Othello*.

Roy Burkhead: The production wasn't exactly a tragedy, was it? I've seen a few plays in my life, and I walked out of the Troutt Theater stunned. Easily, one of the best productions I've ever seen, both here and in London.

Jon Royal: Thank you! I'm very happy with how the production was received. It's a testament to the fine talent that we have here in Nashville. This ensemble and production team really hit on something special.

RB: So, it's your first time directing for NSF, and you're looking at *Othello* and Eddie George. What were your initial reactions to getting started?

JR: The first thing I thought was how excited I was to be directing for NSF. I've been focusing on directing for the last ten years, and Denice has been extremely supportive! I knew that I wanted to focus on the military aspects of the piece because of the United States' recent history. When you break it down, a high-ranking soldier, who I believe has suffered from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), kills his wife, then commits suicide. Unfortunately we live in a world in which that can happen.

RB: Before we get into the play and the production, talk a little bit about students. What are some of the takeaways for students seeing *Othello* for the first time?

JR: Hopefully students can see the actions of the characters and understand trust is important, but communication is even more important. Several characters trust Iago with their feelings about other individuals in the play. After one conversation with him, they develop a plan of action that never involves talking to the person they're at odds with! It happens over and over. What if Othello simply talks to his wife? What if Roderigo approaches Desdemona? What if Emilia speaks up and says, "I took the handkerchief!"

RB: I was excited to learn that students from Monroe Harding, over in Nashville's Green Hills area, were going to attend one of the performances. Talk a little bit about how that happened and if you have any idea about how they reacted to it? (When I arrived in Nashville in 1990, I worked as a counselor in the teen-age boy's

cottage for a year.)

JR: Until right now, I had no idea that they had attended the show. That's great to hear. I'm fascinated to know what they thought of it. I used to teach drama classes there, through a program for Tennessee Repertory Theatre! I learned a lot from those experiences.

RB: The Troutt Theater is an interesting place. Has a nice mood to it. Does the physical place in which a play takes place have any impact on how you would direct it? Would you have done anything differently if you put it on in Nashville's Centennial Park?

JR: I feel that the physical space has a great bearing on how you present a story to an audience. This piece is very intimate. There are several scenes that occur in places where two people might meet in secret. On a proscenium stage with movable pieces designed by Morgan Matens, we were able to pull the audience in and make a large theater seem smaller. In the park the approach might have been different because the Bandshell has no off-stage wing space.

RB: I enjoyed your use of technology in the play. Could you talk a little bit about that and how you use props? Can there be too much technology, too many props in a play?

JR: It all depends on what the story demands. Very early, I knew that I wanted to focus on the idea of a soldier's mission. Identify the target. Seek the target. Destroy the target. It's exactly what Iago does. It's

what he convinces Othello to do, as well. The radar screen was an extension of that idea. How much technology you employ to tell a story depends on what the story needs.

RB: Eddie George made his debut as a Shakespearean actor playing the title role in the NSF's production of *Julius Caesar* in 2012. Do you have any idea as to how that helped him play Othello? If so, how?

JR: I was a cast member of that production, and I saw how hard Eddie worked. You could tell he wasn't new to the language, but using the language to navigate a scene with other actors, in a full production, is different than working with Shakespeare in an acting class. That production was a sort of like Shakespeare boot camp for him.

RB: Were there things that you could have Eddie George do because of his athletic ability that another actor may not have been able to accomplish? It's a powerful, physical role.

JR: It wasn't so much, as his ability, but his stature. Once Eddie hits the stage, you have a good idea why the Venetian state has entrusted their military prowess to him. It also amplifies his breakdown. If an individual who stands that tall can lose his mind, then anyone who can.

RB: Or is it all that physical? It's fair to refer to it as a psychological thriller, right?

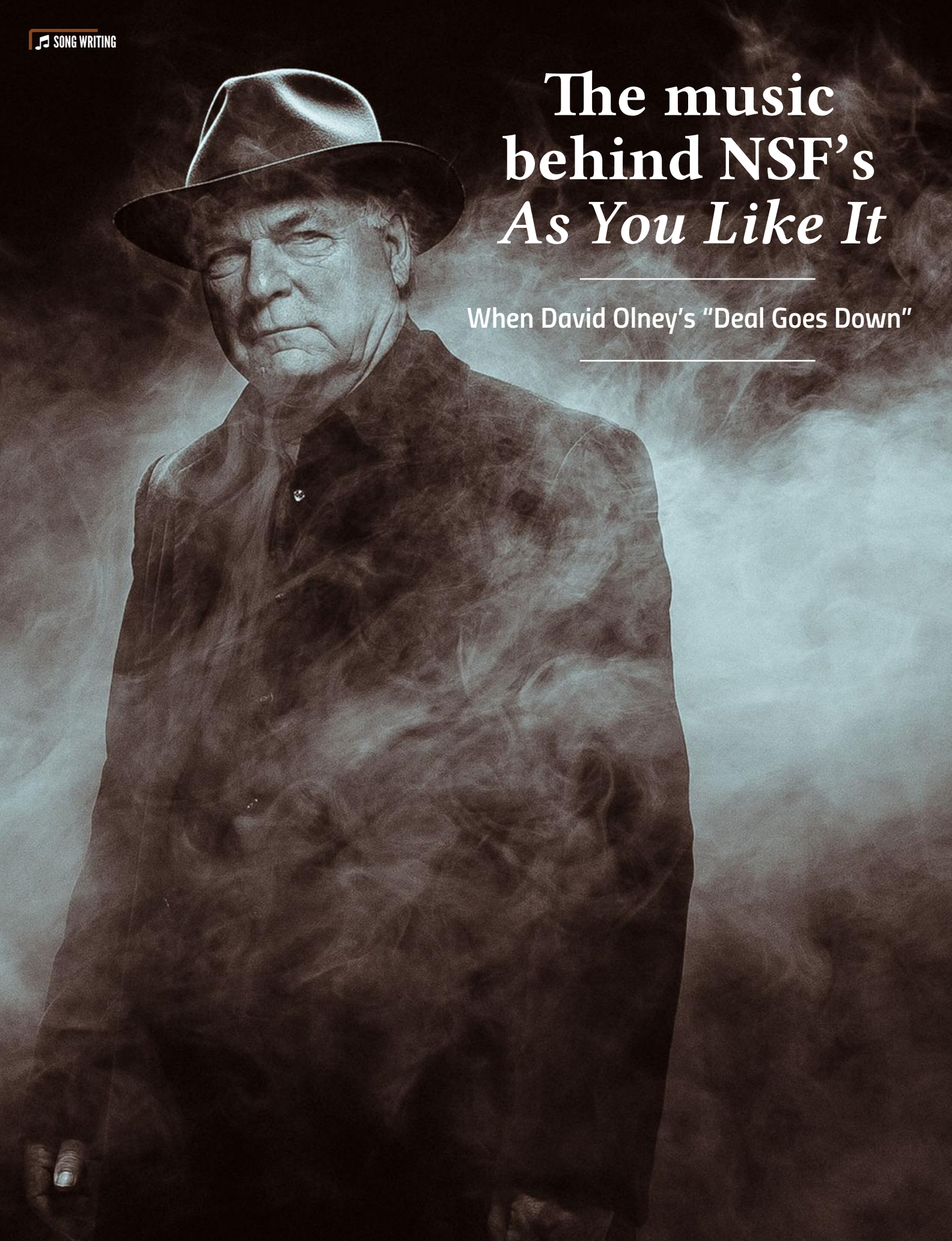
JR: I think it depends on the actor who's playing the role. It's definitely a psychological thriller, but in a large space, with an actor with Eddie's abilities, you should use them to tell the story. There's a scene in which Othello works himself up and has a seizure. That event starts internally, but the actor has to use his physical skills to fully communicate that moment.

RB: Is there anything positive to say about the outcome of the play, about the nature of friendship?

JR: If we look at it as a cautionary tale, sure. It's like I said before, take that extra step and actually communicate what you're feeling in an honest way, with whoever you're having a conflict with. ☐



TOP: Photo by Jeff Frazier. Eddie George as Othello.



The music behind NSF's *As You Like It*

When David Olney's "Deal Goes Down"

Press Release:

When the Deal Goes Down, by David Olney

Master storyteller David Olney announced a July 8, 2014 release date for his latest studio album, *When the Deal Goes Down*, on Deadbeet Records. Produced by David Olney and Mark Robinson and recorded/mixed at Guido's Studios South in Nashville, *When the Deal Goes Down* presents a dozen tales of roots music mayhem and delight, with the acclaimed singer/songwriter backed by a cadre of some of Music City's most creative players, including long-time Olney compadre Sergio Webb on guitar. The new album is the first time Olney and Robinson have worked together.

Olney offered his hometown Nashville fans a special treat with a double-dose of performances that celebrated the new album: on July 8, a free in-store show and CD signing at Grimey's Too/Howlin' Books; and on July 9 a full-blown CD release show (with special guest RB Morris) at The End. Later in the summer, David Olney made his debut as a Shakespearean actor in the annual Nashville Shakespeare in the Park. During the extended run engagement (August 14 – September 14) at Nashville's Centennial Park, Olney played the part of Lord Amiens in a modern version of *As You Like It*, and also contributed new original music to the play.

Bolstered by Olney's wicked sense of humor, counterbalanced with his knack for writing both dramatic and insightful lyrics, *When the Deal Goes Down* takes listeners on a wild ride of emotions from love and hope to fear and despair, all the while being entertaining as-hell. From the comedy of "Mister Stay at Home" and "Servant Job" to the tragedy of "No Trace" and "Scarecrow Man," the new CD convincingly covers both the biting funny and chillingly stark sides of the street – and doing a fair bit of jaywalking in between them, too.

"I thought it might be helpful to God if I told him (or her) what I wanted from him (or her)," he says about the origin of the album's title track. "God answered with a lightning bolt that just missed my head. What a kiddier!"

On *When the Deal Goes Down*, he once again has several co-writes with long-time collaborator John Hadley, including the song "No Trace."

"I pictured it in Africa, but it could also apply to West Virginia. Or anywhere in North or South America. Or the land of Canaan. Or the planet Earth. You get the idea," Olney confides. "They pair up once more on "Mister Stay at Home," a tune Olney says "has a jug band feel with some Mills Brothers thrown in. Grumpy old guy decides to go to town and have some fun. Hey, wait a minute, I resemble that remark."

One of the most visual and visceral tracks on the new album is the mesmerizing "Scarecrow Man."

"There are any number of things in life that can do us in, but what really terrorizes us are the demons we create in our own minds," he says about the song. "They don't disappear until we breathe our last breath." And then he adds, "This was originally a Cha Cha."

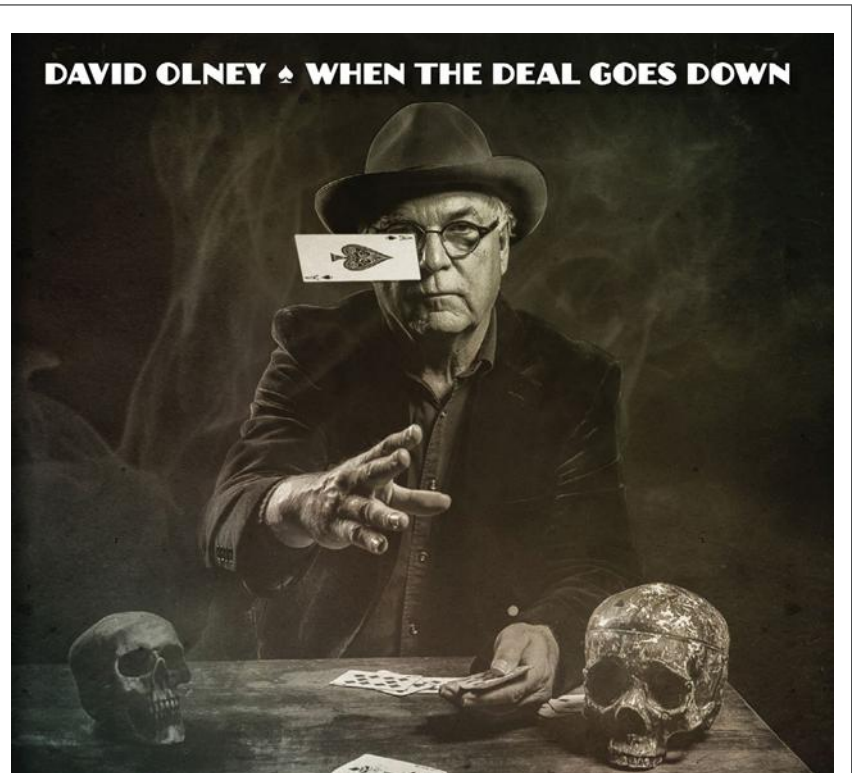
David Olney's music has been compared to Tom Waits and Johnny Cash, and he has had songs recorded by Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Del McCoury, Lonnie Brooks, Tim O'Brien, and Steve Young, among many others. Over a career that span four decades, he's recorded more than 20 albums and toured around the world. In 2013, his song, "Postcard from Mexico," was prominently featured in the hit ABC-TV series, *Nashville*. His YouTube channel has become must-see destination for web fans every Tuesday with his "You Never Know" video shorts featuring the story behind a song and its performance, along with other personal observations, as well as music videos and classic poetry recitations, such as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

"Olney brings to mind other acclaimed storytellers like Ray Wylie Hubbard and Randy Newman, and his work holds its own with this esteemed company," wrote Michael Berick in his *Blurt* review of an earlier album, adding, "Olney has created such a memorable set of distinctive characters and dramatic scenarios that this work seems like a soundtrack to a novella or stage production." □

"Can one desire too much of a good thing?"

As You Like It
(Act IV, Scene I)

LEFT: Photo by Gregg Roth



Track list

- When the Deal Goes Down
- Little Bird (What I Do)
- Servant, Job
- Soldier of Misfortune
- Something in Blue
- Scarecrow Man
- Why So Blue?
- Mister Stay at Home
- Roll This Stone
- No Trace
- Sad Saturday Night
- Big Blue Hole

Review: *Hamlet's BlackBerry*

By Dhwani Priya

On Christmas morning, my-eight-year-old niece Maya unwrapped a much awaited iPad mini. Less than a month later I stopped by my visit only to find Maya hunkered down in an armchair, gripping the device with both hands, her doe eyes seemingly paralyzed by the soft glow of the screen. She was oblivious to our conversation until I warned her that using the iPad for more than two hours a day would *ruin* her tender young brain.

Trying to be a good aunt, I continued: "Maya, you have to be careful. Those things will fry your brain."

But as I spoke I felt more than a tinge of guilt because for the past fifteen minutes my attention had been divided between the steaming cup of tea in my right hand and the iPhone hidden at the bottom of my purse which I stealthily searched for with my left hand—hoping to sneak a quick Facebook scroll.

At this point in digital history, there seem to be a lot of people like me. With fingers soothed by touch screens and hearts warmed by the tomes of incoming messages, we have become compulsively dependent on our internet connected devices. We tend to have an instinctive sense that this behavior is detrimental to our well being, but we're not exactly sure how. All around us there are signs that we are trying to tone down the use of our phones, tablets, computers, and even e-readers to *healthy* levels. Parenting web sites are loaded with advice on how to "limit your kids' iPad time," and we are now encouraged and often instructed to turn our phones off in environments ranging from offices and schools to theaters and restaurants. We lecture our children and each other on the importance of *turning off* and *unplugging* but why do we need to? Surely there is a better answer than simply, "it will ruin your brain."

Few people have explored these questions as thoroughly and methodically as author William Powers does in his 2010 bestseller, *Hamlet's BlackBerry: A Practical Philosophy for Building a Good Life in the Digital Age*. Powers, a former staff writer for *The Washington Post* has written extensively about media, politics, and technology and carefully examines the complex love-fear relationship that many of us have with what he calls "connective technologies." Mining the wisdom of an impressive reading list which includes Plato, Shakespeare, and Thoreau, Powers seeks to define our technology concerns and help us overcome them.

According to Powers, one of the biggest dangers posed by the current abundance of digital connection is the loss of depth, that "quality of awareness, feeling, or under-

standing that comes when we truly engage with some aspect of our life experience."

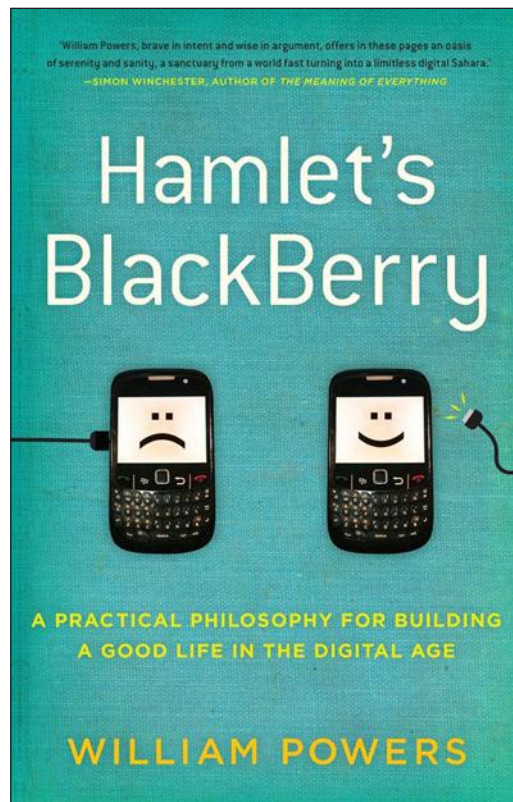
Our devices become gateways for waves of information that flood the inner spaces of the mind. They roll in constantly via e-mail, text message, Facebook, and Twitter. Yet without breathing room it is impossible to fully absorb any of it. The brain begins to behave like scraps of flint hopping over the water's surface without ever being fully immersed.

Though this brain hopping phenomenon doesn't quite constitute ruination, it can be threatening to creative pursuits and original

connectedness such as creating a digital free "Walden Zone" in his home and taking an "Internet Sabbath." While these accounts are inspiring and encouraging, they may not be practical for everyone. For readers struggling with digital dependence, the true beauty of *Hamlet's BlackBerry* is the way it puts our devices into perspective, reminding us that the latest gadgets are merely the most recent additions to a long line of connective technologies which began with language itself.

One of the classic works referenced by Powers is Plato's Phaedrus, in which Socrates is just as addicted to speech as I am to my iPhone. He is hooked on both listening and talking to the point that he is reluctant to leave the voice laden cacophony of the city walls. Yet the emerging technology of writing clearly frightens him. Socrates worries it will destroy memory, discourage original thought and prevent the free flow of ideas. He warns young Phaedrus of the dangers of text, narrating the story of an Egyptian king who rejected writing on the basis that it makes people "tiresome" and gives them the "reputation of knowledge without the reality." It's as if the philosopher is saying, "Watch out, young man. Those new fangled scrolls you're toting around will ruin your brain."

Today Socrates' apprehension about written language seems ridiculous. But perhaps those initial concerns and fears are just part of the adaptation process we are bound to endure with each new mode of connection that comes along. After all, most of us who are over the age of thirty can remember being told by our parents that too much television will "rot your brain." But we all watched anyway. We learned balance, and we survived. It's a feat that as, *Hamlet's BlackBerry* reminds us, we've done before and are quite capable of doing again without scaring the children. ☐



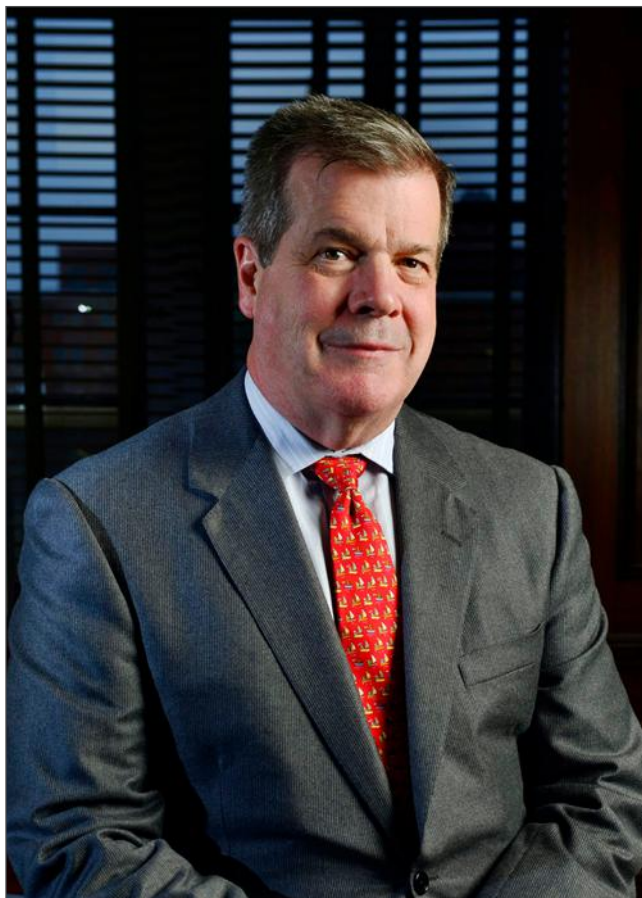
thought since "great artists, thinkers, and leaders all have an unusual capacity to be 'grasped' by some idea or mission, an inner engagement that drives them to pursue a vision undaunted by obstacles."

As it turns out William Powers has first-hand knowledge of the havoc that this shallow, overloaded state of mind can wreak on a project. In a 2010 interview with Katie Couric, he confessed that as a writer he noticed he was having "trouble staying with the book" while doing research. He describes feeling like a "creature of the crowd," so heavily influenced by outside voices that he felt like he was participating in "group think" rather than synthesizing his own ideas.

Hamlet's BlackBerry documents some of Powers' fairly successful attempts to reduce

An Announcement From Nashville Mayor Karl Dean ...

Shakespeare on the Road: *NSF Rides On*



Mayor Dean's Remarks:

May 3, 2014 at NSF's Shakespeare Allowed! at Nashville Public Library

Thank you, Donald. And thank you for the amazing time and energy you have put into bringing Shakespeare to thousands of Nashvillians.

Last week, as I described our work in Metro Government in the annual State of Metro Address, I found myself looking to Shakespeare to help me make my point about many forces coming together.

I ended my speech with words from *Henry V*. Written hundreds of years ago, Shakespeare's words still resonate with me and millions of others. The Bard still speaks truth to us in ways that few authors can match.

One of my favorite words from literature happen in *Henry V*:

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day."

In the summer of 1988, a "happy few" – "a band of brothers and sisters" if you will, decided to put on a Shakespeare play for free in Centennial Park.

That production of *As You Like It* was the launch of what became a Nashville tradition.

Since then, 10,000 to 15,000 people come to the park each summer to watch inspired and creative productions of the Bard's works.

Nashvillians and visitors who might never otherwise see a professional production of Shakespeare have watched Romeo die for his beloved Juliet, Benedick and Beatrice exchange verbal barbs, and the murderous machinations of Lady Macbeth – all for free and all in Nashville's own central park.

But the Nashville Shakespeare festival has done so much more.

In 1992, they launched an educational outreach program in local public schools that has brought Shakespeare's works to more than 180,000 students.

The Winter Shakespeare production launched in 2008 has brought plays like *Othello* and *Hamlet* to local audiences.

"Shakespeare Allowed," which is taking place here today, is in its 6th year. A partnership of the Festival and the library, this program brings together students, professors, citizens, ESL learners and anyone who wishes to participate in reading Shakespeare aloud.

It is yet another way that the Festival makes the beauty, drama, and humanity of Shakespeare come alive today.

The work of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival has earned it much praise in our community and beyond.

Today I am pleased to announce that the fantastic work of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival has now received international recognition from the foremost authority on the life and works of William Shakespeare: the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust located in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

The Trust and the University of Warwick have chosen Nashville's Festival as one of

fourteen North American Shakespeare Festivals that will be visited and documented as part of their joint "Shakespeare on the Road" research project.

The project is celebrating the 400th and 450th anniversaries of Shakespeare's birth and death, and will culminate in a book and documentary film.

The Stratford team will arrive in Nashville on August 23rd and receive a warm welcome at a gathering here at the library.

The team will attend the local Shakespeare in the Park production of *As You Like It* on August 23rd and 24th, reaching out to capture not only the spirit of the production but also the energy of the city.

They will conduct interviews with actors, supporters, and participants to help capture the importance of the Bard in Nashville.

I want to encourage Nashvillians to mark their calendars now for those August productions.

The production of *As You Like It* is a fitting one for this visit, as it is one of the most musical of all of Shakespeare's works.

The production will be set in Middle Tennessee during the 1930s, a rich time in the musical history of our region. This was when Grand Ole Opry performers became stars and when both the blues and bluegrass took root.

As part of the production, local and legendary songwriter and musician David Olney and the Musical Heritage Center of Pegram, Tennessee will write original music for the show.

The combination of reaching back and creating anew has been a hallmark of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival, and I know this will shine through in the Shakespeare on the Road documentary.

Congratulations to the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. I look forward to the summer production of *As You Like It* and to letting the world know of the ways that Shakespeare lives on in Nashville. ☐

TOP: Photo courtesy of Metro Nashville Photographic Services

In Depth: Denice Hicks

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival's Artistic Director

by River Jordan



Dusk is falling on the city of dreams. It's the kind of evening people long for in September, one where the nights are warm with a hint of the chill that is just around the corner. On this night, people are wandering in on the green, spreading blankets, opening chairs and picnic baskets. There is the ripple of anticipation in the air. A collective sense of something coming, something unexpected, something magical. Something old and—yet—made new again.

Music fills the air as the pre-show band takes the stage. And this performance alone would make the evening special, but the deeper magic lies beyond. It takes place when the Nashville Shakespeare Festival's acting troupe arrives and begins to unleash its creative energy into a delighted crowd. The performances are stellar. The sets, the costuming, and the lighting: exquisite. The artistic vision is a fresh, brave take on a classic play.

This level of excellence in performance, integrity, and creative artistic expression is exactly what one would expect for the City of New York.

This isn't New York.

It's the Deep South on a perfect Nashville night. So it stands to reason that a Nashville original, Ms. Denice Hicks, arrived at the Shakespearean stage over two decades ago as assistant director of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival (NSF), and in doing so, she has played a key role in directing the NSF to where it is today.

Let's face it: Nashville stands out with a gold star on our national map. Mention in passing while miles from home that you are from Nashville, and eyes are likely to sparkle. So many people either have visited Nashville at some point and loved it, or they have longed to visit. Once upon a time, all that visitation may have centered around the business of bluegrass and country music. Things are different today.

Not long ago, the *New York Times* tagged Nashville as the new "it" city. Our town has quickly become the darling destination of good folks pouring in from Los Angeles and New York, wanting to call Nashville home and settle here. Now we can proudly add one more sizable reason for us to be a little puffed with pride around these parts. The Nashville Shakespeare Festival has now drawn the illustrious attention of the Bard's homeland. Over the summer at the Nashville Public Library, Mayor Karl Dean broke the news, stating "Today I am pleased to announce that the fantastic work of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival has now received international recognition from the foremost authority on the life and works of William Shakespeare: the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust located in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

"The Trust and the University of Warwick have chosen Nashville's Festival as one of fourteen North American Shakespeare Festivals that will be visited and documented as part of their joint 'Shakespeare on the Road' research project."

America is an enormous country with quality performances happening from coast to coast and all places in between. Being one of fourteen is like saying the Loveless Café has biscuits. They don't just have them, they own them. They've blended a special concoction that draws people to Nashville from across this wide country and beyond.

So, allow me to repeat myself.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in England's Stratford-upon-Avon selected the Nashville Shakespeare Festival as one of only fourteen cities (with the inclusion of one from Canada) to be featured in its prestigious Shakespeare on the Road.

That kind of attention had me sitting down for tea with Ms. Hicks just before Shakespeare on the Road pulled into town. Our choice of a place to meet was the newly-opened Thistle Stop Café run by the graduates of the Thistle Farms program founded by Rev. Becca Stevens. It was the perfect place to discuss the power of story in our lives, how it affects us, and

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival & Corporate Sponsorship

Sure, advertising opportunities include space in the playbill and banner advertising in Centennial Park, but there are other benefits available to corporate sponsors who support the NSF's mission.

Corporate Sponsorship Benefit Levels

Naming Rights: \$40,000 Season, \$25,000 Shakespeare in the Park, \$15,000 Winter Shakespeare.

"Naming Rights" is an exclusive presenting sponsorship, where your company name will appear as part of the name of the event, plus you receive the benefits of the corresponding sponsorship below.

Season Sponsorship: \$25,000 (\$40,000 for naming rights). This sponsorship supports both of the NSF's major productions in the summer and winter. Benefits Include:

- * Sponsorship billing on all posters, postcards, television commercials, and Web PSA's for the season.

- * 3x8 logo banner in the park for the summer

- * Logo visibility in the lobby of Troutt Theatre for winter performance

- * Full page ad in the playbill for both the winter and summer shows

- * Reserved seating for up to 30 people for your chosen night of Shakespeare in the Park and Winter Shakespeare

- * Opportunity for your organization to send representatives to participate in an educational workshop at the school of your choice

- * Reserved seating for up to 20 people to attend the corresponding sponsored matinee performance with the school of your choice

Shakespeare in the Park Sponsorship: \$10,000 (\$25,000 for naming rights). Benefits Include:

- * Sponsorship billing on all posters, postcards, television commercials, and PSA's for the summer show

- * 3'x8' banner in the park & full page playbill ad for the summer show

- * Reserved seating for up to 20 people for your chosen night of Shakespeare in the Park

Winter Shakespeare Sponsorship: \$5,000 (\$15,000 for naming rights). This sponsorship supports only the winter production. Benefits Include:

- * Sponsorship billing on all posters, postcards, television commercials, and PSA's for the winter show

- * Full page ad in the playbill for the winter show

- * Logo placement in Troutt Theatre lobby for winter performance

- * Reserved seating for up to 20 people to the Winter Shakespeare show (night or nights of your choosing)

Education Sponsorship: \$2,000. Benefits Include:

- * Sponsorship billing on Education Guides

- * Half page ad in the playbill for the corresponding sponsored show

- * Public acknowledgement and thanks during curtain speech before corresponding sponsored performance

- * Opportunity for your organization to send representatives to participate in an educational workshop at the school of your choice. Reserved seating for up to 20 people to attend the corresponding sponsored performance with the school of your choice.

For more information about becoming a Nashville Shakespeare Festival Sponsor, please contact Development Director Rickey Chick Marquardt at rickeychick@nashvilleshakes.org or (615) 255-2273

To Help the NSF with Their Mission

Your tax-deductible donation is essential to the NSF's mission. As a donor, you will enjoy the great benefits, along with the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to bring Shakespeare to more than 20,000 adults and children each year. Not a dollar donated to the NSF is ever wasted, nor is money spent on goods or services that they can get donated. Nevertheless, bringing the best professional Shakespeare possible to Nashville free of charge involves significant costs:

- * They believe strongly in compensating the talented artists who work with them—from the actors on the stage to the musicians to the scenic and costume designers and more!
- * They also have to pay for such elements as lights, costumes, props, and sets.
- * And they have an extensive educational outreach that puts Shakespeare in our local schools, and that needs donation support.

how it is a part of our ever-growing city.

I arrived after Ms. Hicks (those who know me don't need to read between the lines here) and searched the room. I expected someone dressed in the standard theatre black, dark red lips, perhaps wearing a dash of feathers in her hair. But at first meeting, Ms. Hicks doesn't strike one as a revolutionary, theatrical, wild-woman.

She is an attractive woman with a winning smile. Quietly confident and unassuming. Catch her eyes across a crowded room and you would notice a light, a reflective intelligence, but would you take her for the woman who has helped guide the Nashville Shakespeare Festival to this level of international attention? I don't think so. It's like sitting with a superhero disguised as a quiet, law-abiding citizen.

Settling in, Hicks recounts the tale of how, on a quiet evening at home, she opened her e-mail to discover a subject line that sounded like a potential advertisement or newsletter. Reading the contents lead her to a YouTube web link that—once clicked—led to great news. Two English gentlemen stepped into the frame and into her life, greeting her with, "Hello Denise there in Nashville! We've been watching you." A little creepy? Perhaps for a moment. But totally exhilarating when she discovered that, indeed, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival had been included in Shakespeare on the Road and would be featured in an upcoming book about Shakespeare in America.

Hicks is no stranger to hitting the refresh button with each new season. When asked how she continues to keep Shakespeare alive for Nashville's audiences year after year, she assures me that you can't kill Shakespeare.

"He was the first writer to fully capture what it was to be fully human," Hicks shares. She goes on to explain with a special light in her eyes, "that what is truth and poetry and excellence will survive and thrive in any age."

She also leans in and shares a bit of personal history. Hicks training is in theatre, serious theatre. She trained in the style of the Japanese theatre where excellence was key and you were expected to always give your best.

"If you didn't," she says with a smile, "you would be killed."

"Really?" I'm such a sucker for a story. I suspend all disbelief and begin there.

"No, not really." But then she adds with a serious tone, maybe one mirrored in the memory of a particular moment. "But, we played as if we would be."

One thing that is paramount to me over our visit is not just Hick's love of Shakespeare and her passion for keeping his work alive, but doing so in such a way that is culturally relevant to today's audiences. If the name Shakespeare brings back days of middle school and being forced to read poetry that sounded foreign and out of touch with present reality, consider 2013's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set in the time period of now. The entire production was an exact reflection of what Hicks had referred to earlier, of the timelessness of Shakespeare. In this particular production, the play was set in modern

The NSF strives to make it convenient for the public to make a gift.

Ways and methods of support are as follows:

- * On-site donations at any NSF production. While none is required, it's hoped that audience members at each summer's Shakespeare in the Park production will donate \$10.
- * Automatic monthly contribution (to be deducted from a checking account).
- * A one-time contribution (made via check).
- * Donations done online via <http://www.nashvilleshakes.org/individuals.htm>
- * By check, via mail, at The Nashville Shakespeare Festival, 161 Rains Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203
- * By phone, (615) 255 – BARD. Visa, MasterCard, and Discover accepted. Office hours are 9-5, M-F.
- * A matching gift program to encourage philanthropy among company employees. To learn more about this method, call (615) 255-2273.

day, full of characters who were taking selfies with cell phones and immediately posting them to Twitter and Instagram.

It's a prime example of how the Nashville Shakespeare Festival has been culturally touchable. In the age of Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and a barrage of other media, they bring Shakespeare's words into focus so that audiences of all ages can relate and enjoy. For those who love classical works, and love for them to be produced in classical style, I would encourage them right now to circle the Nashville Shakespeare Festival performances on their calendars and make *absolutely certain* they pull their children, grandchildren, or that new kid on the block away from their obsession with video games so that they might get to sit under the spell of a production that will both enlighten *and* entertain them.

Ms. Hicks illustrates the level of involvement her troupe has in the community. We discuss the creation of Shakespeare Allowed!, which takes place the first Saturday of each month at the Nashville Public Library where people from all walks of life can and do sit and read Shakespeare in a friendly environment.

In fact, it was at Shakespeare Allowed!, during the intermission from the group reading from *Pericles*, where Nashville Mayor Karl Dean made the official announcement about Shakespeare on the Road and the honor of our very own Nashville Shakespeare Festival being included in it.

When I ask Hicks about where the idea for Shakespeare Allowed! originated, or the ideas for such Nashville Shakespeare Festival programs as Shakespeare in Action Workshops, Business Workshops, Teaching Artists, the Apprentice Company, and others, she points back to the City of Nashville itself. The fact that it has birthed so much creativity that the source of fresh ideas seem to simply be in the water. Not only do those in the theatre offer excellent seasons of professional theatre, but they also provide the community with an original array of offerings throughout the year. Of course this kind of quality involvement is not a single-handed operation even in a city where creativity is in the air. All hands on deck, all hearts on board, all . . . okay, you get the idea. Permit us to give a generous nod to the team members that make up the core of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival—starting with Donald Capparella, "without whom, the Festival would not exist," Hicks said of the man who founded the NSF in the late 1980s, following it with well-deserved praise of his "27 years of selfless service to the company and the greater community."

Hicks said that "the Continuing Legal Education workshops we offer every year are thanks to him and his knowledge of law and Shakespeare, and I consider him my primary consultant on all concepts and ideas."

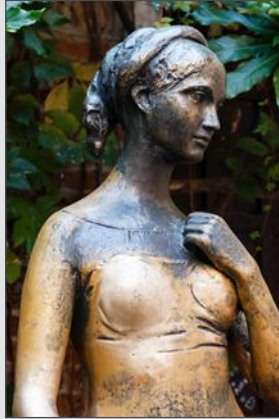
A local litigator with Dodson Parker Behm & Capparella, Donald Capparella's popular "Much Ado About Ethics" seminar combines the Bard's works with today's legal ethical dilemmas, and all of the proceeds benefit the NSF. Known in Tennessee's law

A Conversation with Denice Hicks

Even before we published our first issue, I knew there would be an issue focusing on the Theatre. And once that issue started to form, I was not surprised that so much of it involved the Nashville Shakespeare Festival (NSF). I first attended Shakespeare in the Park here in 1991, a year after Denice Hicks—the NSF’s artistic director—joined the company. We were thrilled when Denice agreed to be our In Depth cover story for this issue. Not long ago, she took time out of her busy schedule (*and I mean busy schedule!*) to talk with us.

Roy Burkhead: Okay Denice, before we get started, I just gotta clarify something. I was in the audience back in February 2014 at the Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt’s Stronger ARTS/STRONGER Cities event. You were being interviewed. Did you say that you performed in a sort of vaudeville act as a child? If so, what was that like? When was your stage debut?

Denice Hicks: In my hometown of Lenni, Pennsylvania, my family was involved with the V.F.W.-sponsored annual minstrel show. My mother sang, directed, painted sets, and encouraged my siblings and I to participate, as well. During the Vietnam War, we took the show to VA Medical Centers. There were very old men there who’d been so damaged during World War I and World War II that they’d never left the hospital, and there were very young men who’d lost both legs or sustained other devastating damage. My ma told me that if we brightened even just one of their days with a song or a joke, we’d done a good day’s work. So I learned very early that performing is both community service and “work.” Even at age five, I knew performing wasn’t about what I was doing, but why I was doing it, and for whom.



RB: At what age did you discover Shakespeare and how?

DH: I was very fortunate to have an extraordinary English teacher in high school, Mr. Polignone, who read Shakespeare out loud to us and passed his passion for the poetry along to his students. I went to Point Park University at age 17 and auditioned for the Pittsburgh Playhouse’s production of *Romeo and Juliet* during my sophomore year, 1979. I was cast as Juliet, which was my first Shakespearean role. Thanks to Mr. Polignone, I never thought of the language as difficult, only challenging and beautiful.

RB: So, you’re working at Opryland (the amusement park, not the hotel) in 1980 in the *Country Music USA* show. A decade later, you’re the assistant director of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* over at the NSF. Could you share a little bit about those ten years? How did your transition to the NSF happen?

DH: Auditions for Opryland just happened to be at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, and after auditioning on a lark, I was cast in that *Country Music USA* show. From Opryland, I followed director Phil Padgett to the Barn Dinner Theater circuit where I worked for a few years before auditioning for Mac Pirkle’s first Nashville production, *If I Live to See Next Fall*. That show lit the spark that became Tennessee Repertory Theatre. At age 22, I was a member of a repertory theatre company, which was really my only ambition. ...so then what to do? In 1989 several of us from the Rep turned a church in West Nashville into the Darkhorse Theater, a place where we could experiment and produce plays that didn’t fit within the Rep’s repertoire. At about that same time, the folks at the Shakespeare Festival were finding their legs and seeing some commonalities in vision and mission, so we merged Darkhorse and Shakespeare. Once the Shakes Fest’s educational outreach started demanding more of our time, we split the two companies in 1994.

RB: With the exception of a couple of years, you’ve been with the NSF all this time. When you joined up, did you know this was going to be a long-term gig? What has it been like for you at the NSF for almost 25 years?

DH: I have recently come to realize that the “be here now” mind set of an actor prevents a lot of forward vision. For many years, we all just focused on doing the very best show we could. The one we were working on was all we thought about. As I moved into more directing and administrating, the necessity of planning one-to-five-to-ten years out presented itself in no uncertain terms. Strategic planning is actually something I enjoy now, even though believing in the future is still something that requires some effort.

RB: We have a commitment to public service at the journal, and that’s one of the things that I admire about the NSF. Mr. Donald Capparella founded the NSF in 1988, right? I can’t imagine someone creating something like the NSF without having an emotional and artistic vested interest in the community. Could you speak about the early days and how it all came to be?

DH: Donald had experience in Orlando with the Shakespeare Festival down there. As a young actor (and lawyer) he recognized the value of a Shakespeare Festival to the community. Shakespeare wrote for everyone—in every play you will find a character that represents you, your friends, your colleagues, and bosses. Shakespeare’s plays provide meaningful life experiences for all who gather to share them, and that makes for stronger communities. Donald and the other founders of Nashville Shakes were determined to make this kind of quality performances available for everyone, and to this day, no admission charge is required. The \$10 suggested donation at Shakespeare in the Park is very budget-friendly. Even our Winter Shakes tickets are reasonably priced with volunteer opportunities available for those who cannot afford to purchase a ticket. We write grants to provide subsidies for school workshops, bus vouchers, and student tickets, and our programming at the downtown library and Room in the Inn is free. We really do all we can to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy Shakespeare’s work!

RB: I’ve come to realize over the years that the skill set needed to create something from scratch is often much different than the skill set needed to maintain something. That being said, Mr. Capparella remains to this day an active player in the troupe, as it were. He’s a well-accomplished lawyer, and he’s been able to incorporate the Bard into the city in some interesting ways. Could you go into the Continuing Legal Education workshops?

DH: Every year, in order to maintain their licenses, lawyers need a certain number of hours of Continuing Legal Education, and Donald Capparella has been teaching CLE sessions for years. Most of the time, these sessions are just lawyers teaching about the changes in the rules for that year or current topical events, but Donald recognized that introducing a level of entertainment to the sessions would make the learning more engaging. Shakespeare’s plays offer plenty of ethical dilemmas that illustrate situations which contemporary lawyers may encounter. So the Shakespeare Festival provided professional actors to perform for the lawyers, and sometimes even the lawyers themselves volunteer to play supporting roles. These CLEs have proven to be very popular, and so each December we offer at least one ethics class (*Much Ado About Ethics*) at the downtown public library.

RB: I’ve always wondered how the NSF chooses a particular play. Do some plays translate better in a traditional theater setting, verses at a park? Are you able to choose a favorite play, or would it be like choosing a favorite child?

community as a *Super Lawyer* (no more than five percent of the state's lawyers receive this honor), he may be equally viewed as one of Nashville's *Super Citizens*. In addition to his many accomplishments and recognitions, he remains actively involved in the NSF as a director, actor, fundraiser, and board chairman. Often, he can be found role playing during each production's volunteer training sessions—teaching area volunteers how to appropriately interact with audience members and patrons.

Next is Nettie Kraft, the education director for the Festival. She has studied abroad in England and lived all over the United States, all in preparation for her move to Nashville. She has been in several commercials and seen on stage for the Tennessee Women's Theatre Project, Actor's Bridge Ensemble, and the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. In addition, she teaches at Belmont University, MTSU, TSU, and Watkins College, and she is starting another theatre company: The Five Dollar Recession Theatre Company.

Okay, that's the bio found just about anywhere. What I can't even begin to understand is how Ms. Kraft can pull off the multitude of educational responsibilities she has with such grace and wit. On a recent afternoon, I popped into the Nashville Shakespeare Festival offices to say hello and check out their physical space. They reside in office and studio spaces in the Nashville Public Television building.

Here's my vision of Ms. Kraft as education director during that visitation. She's dressed in black tights, a long-sleeve t-shirt and is standing barefoot in a circle of students learning how to take a punch on stage and fall in a convincing manner while not breaking a bone in the process. The fact that she is watching the Apprentice Company learning their moves doesn't surprise me. What brings a real smile is the fact that she is taking punches and falling with the best of them. She gets up after a particular fall and says, "I can do that better," and so she falls again. Better this time.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Robert Marigza, the operations manager. He first became involved with the Nashville Shakespeare Festival as an actor in the 1994 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Since then, he has served as actor, stage manager, technical director, crew, production assistant, and teacher. And if anyone is to be the operations manager, you want it to be someone who loves, and again I say - *loves* - the stage with an understanding of it from every aspect. I'm certain that Mr. Marigza's experience has been a great contribution to bringing the Festival into the place of excellence it holds.

Although I didn't personally meet Development Director Rickey Chick Marquardt, I have the upmost respect for those who devote so many hours to raising funds for a worthy organization. Ms. Marquardt has invested many years in developing major gifts and funds for a variety of worthy causes, including higher

education and non profits. The Nashville Shakespeare Festival is more than a little lucky to have someone with such aplomb to be one of the trusted, valued members of their team.

There are countless other faces and names who have devoted hours upon hours serving on the board, working on committees, or simply twittering about at performances. There isn't space to recognize those individuals here, but I know *2nd & Church* would like to acknowledge that we understand the value of those contributions in bringing the Nashville Shakespeare Festival to this place where they are enriching our community, so much so that studying the website practically brings tears to my eyes. No, I'm not exaggerating. Please, allow me to tell why.

We have incredible concerts and programs, theatre productions and events of all manner that travel to and through Nashville on an annual basis. These provide incredible opportunities and add to the personal enjoyment of living in Nashville. But here's the thing. No matter how much we may enjoy those events, those beautiful productions, concerts, and musicians are still visitors. The Nashville Shakespeare Festival is a part of the community, *our community*, in some of the most creative ways I've had the pleasure to witness.

As a playwright, I've had the pleasure of working in an art form that relies on a great menagerie of people. Every production and performance bring characters to life in new ways. And, every production requires the vision and creative talents of not only the directors and actors, but also the set designers, lighting crew, sound people, costume designers, and—yes—the audience members. But those of us with a theatre background know that the world of theatre can also become familiar: a close-knit family of creatives who stay within their own tribe. Entrance to the backstage, a revered place, requires a password known only to those who are part of the inside circle of the tribe. Ms. Hicks (or The Nashville Shakespeare Festival) has done something extremely dangerous. They've pulled back the curtain and welcomed the city at large into that sacred space. And they've stepped out from behind the curtain and into the heart of this community in original and creative ways.

I lean forward and ask Hicks one last question: "Now that you've drawn this type of attention, that you've been recognized on a major scale from over the big pond and the Bard's own homeland, how will this type of increase in pressure affect what you do next? Of how you will perform?"

She sips her tea, thoughtfully: "We do our best. We always give our very best. That's all we must continue to do."

Their best has provided Nashville with over twenty years of Shakespearean productions, resulting in accolades and international acclaim. Somewhere, surely the old Bard himself must be smiling.

**After the show note: When visiting the Nashville Shakespeare Festival, River Jordan was met by Ms. Denice Hicks at the front desk to escort her back to rehearsal. Ms. Jordan is happy to report that Ms. Hicks was wearing faded overalls rolled up mid-calf, looking very, very artistic. The two sat on the floor in the studio to watch rehearsals of fight moves. And they enjoyed it blow by delighted blow. ☐*

To Become a Volunteer

Volunteering for the NSF's productions is a unique experience that not only serves the arts community of Nashville but also exposes the volunteers to various aspects of the theatrical world. All talents are welcome throughout the year, whether they be as complex as carpentry or as basic as phone skills. Untrained, willing volunteers are also more than welcome to assist the Festival and learn about the things that make it the successful organization that it is today.

The NSF most often uses volunteers during its runs of Shakespeare in the Park. These end-of-summer shows, which are free to the public with a suggested give-what-you-can donation, depend heavily upon their volunteers. These volunteers help with nightly setup, passing out programs, staffing the concessions area, collecting donations, and generally making sure that the things outside of the show itself run smoothly.

The Festival also needs volunteers for its annual Winter Production at Troutt Theater. Volunteers will usher and assist with concessions and box office duties. Ushers are needed both for evening performances and weekday morning matinees for school groups.

To learn more, contact their volunteer coordinator at: volunteers@nashvilleshakes.org

Poetry in the Brew

By Chuck Beard

I must admit, one of the absolute coolest things about running an all-local bookstore (and being the sole employee) is having the everyday opportunity to make friendships with authors and readers and to be able to connect the two any chance I can. I love that East Side Story is more than just selling paper off of shelves for profit; it is a place where people who love reading and writing meet and hang out with each other.

Just about every week, another person comes into town, into my store, wanting to find out how to learn more about—and experience—the local literary scene beyond just the books. I have plenty of answers, without even thinking twice: 1) I host *East Side Storytelling* every first and third Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. with local authors reading and musicians storytelling their original tunes (at Mad Donna's at the time of this publication); 2) Honest Lewis hosts *Free Night of Speech* every second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. with local writers listening and positively critiquing one another (at Logue's Black Raven Emporium); 3) Melanie Vare hosts *That Time of the Month*-shows with curated short stories read monthly at Cafe Coco; 4) Pictures of Fireworks occurs monthly at Fido's-also with curated short stories; and 5) many more once anyone gets into the scene of it all.

But as of late, more often than not, it has been for poetry's sake.

Like all literary circles, it's just a matter of finding out where you fit in with the goals you have in mind. I have yet to see people not discover what they are looking for once they get a few details of people and happenings and start searching. Like I said, lately it has been a flood of questions about local poetry. With Poetry Sucks!

(hosted by Chet Weise) only happening every now and then for special occasions, my first go-to comment is to send people to Poetry in the Brew.

Poetry in the Brew is a monthly, open mic poetry reading that happens every second Saturday of the month upstairs at Portland Brew East with a start time of 6:00 p.m. It's a welcoming community of poets and spoken word performers who come together to share their latest prose and give support to others who might be sharing for the first time. I was first introduced to this event via one of my friends and featured East Side Story poet and co-founder of Poetry in the Brew, Jamie Zoe Givens. Givens, author of the book *Never Offer A Chair To A Dancing Girl*, is able to keep this concept going regularly with the help of Chance Chambers, Michael Allen Pierce (Map), and the rest of the local poets who gather every month to make it happen.

Back in 1999, when Givens first moved to Nashville, there were poetry readings flourishing across the city. There was the open mc at Window's on the Cumberland, popular poetry readings on-going at

Bean Central, Kijiji, Books A Million, and Pub of Love. A quick learner and leader, she started filling in as the guest host of Poetry in the Bean. One of the first poets to inspire Givens was Joe Speer because of the way he performed, his presence on stage, and his mindfulness of his surroundings around vocalizing his art. Givens said that Speer, often referred to as Beatlick Joe, inspired many people.

It was after Beatlick Joe passed—when several members of the poetry community came together to break bread, watch videos, read poems, and tell stories about their dear friend in honor of his passing

and a life lived as sort of a memorial potluck poetry reading—when the idea for this group of people getting together on the regular came about. Map asked Portland Brew East about the location, and they confirmed the spot. Givens, who had been given a sound system years back and who had Chambers there to help make things run smoothly, jumped at the opportunity to do her part in this project that would create an important sense of community and give everyone a voice who wanted to participate.

Over the months and years since its inception, the date and ample amount of local talent has remained constant. To keep things fresh, there is a rotating list of hosts and features in order to include everyone the best way possible. There is a blog maintained at www.poetryinthebrew.wordpress.com with posted bios and poetry of the hosts and features before. You can find more about Poetry in the Brew by showing up in person or connecting with email at poetryinthebrew@hotmail.com and social media links such as www.facebook.com/poetryinthebrew and [@poetryinthebrew](https://twitter.com/poetryinthebrew).

Aside from sharing an introduction or more information about Poetry in the Brew, this is the perfect time to rally the troops for one of the most good-hearted, literary leaders in Nashville: Jamie Zoe Givens. She

isn't mum about the news that she has been recently diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer and has already started chemo treatment. She is a trooper: after her first round of treatments, she managed to attend an *East Side Storytelling* to become the first local poet featured as she read from old and new work for one heck of an unforgettable performance and evening (read more on that night at <http://eastside-storytn.com/east-side-storytelling-21-where-a-dancing-girl-got-her-chair-and-swan-dive-too/>).

Now the poetry community is helping support Givens as she goes through treatment for cancer. Map and friends have made t-shirts to promote Poetry in the Brew, in pink and black, to sell in honor of Givens. The artwork is designed to bring awareness to breast cancer and proceeds from the shirts sold will help cover Givens's medical expenses as much as possible. Purchase a shirt at East Side Story or by coming to the next Poetry in the Brew in person. ☑



TOP: Photo by Terry Price



Parnassus Books

How Publishing Veteran Karen Hayes Helped Change Nashville's Literary Landscape

By Suzanne Craig Robertson

The story of novelist Ann Patchett opening a bookstore in Nashville when other independents had been shuttered is legend in the city: How in 2010 with the closure of Davis-Kidd Booksellers, her hometown found itself without a locally-owned, community-minded bookstore, and how she championed the cause. She continues today, traveling the country talking about the importance of independent bookstores, when she is not at her own store, Parnassus Books.

Patchett has a business partner, Karen Hayes, but her story is lesser known. Her account of how the idea, timing, and partnership came together is fascinating – in fact, it reads a little bit like a fairy tale.

If you're from around Nashville, you will recall that when Davis-Kidd announced the end of the beloved Nashville store, there was a low rumble of panic in the land. Although there were a few good used and niche bookstores scattered throughout the city, there no longer would be an overarching presence where inventory was tailored to the community and where author events, story times, book clubs, and community meetings would be held.

"Davis-Kidd was considered the local bookstore, founded by two women who live here," Hayes says of the store founded by Nashvillians Karen Davis and Thelma Kidd and later sold in 1997 to an out-of-state entity, Joseph-Beth. "It was the store many people in this town grew up with. They took their kids there, or were taken there themselves as a child. It is the place they stopped at to spend time or meet-up with friends.

"The booksellers there were true booklovers; it was a very vibrant and visible establishment."

At the time Davis-Kidd closed, Hayes said that she was working as a book sales representative for Random House, calling on independent bookstores as far away as Texas, Kansas, Ohio, and Virginia. Based in Nashville, Davis-Kidd was one of her customers. She had worked for HarperCollins prior to that—she had been in the industry for more than 30 years, seeing up close the plight of the independent bookstore as it became more dire, with chain stores and Amazon.com gaining in popularity.

"I never considered opening a bookstore," she says. "I saw so many going out of business."

When a friend suggested they open a store together, Hayes says her “first reaction was no way.” Also, she loved her job at Random House.

“But, we needed a bookstore, with Davis-Kidd gone, and I explored the idea,” she says.

According to Hayes, she soon realized she could not go without a salary for as long as starting a bookstore would take, and she shelved the idea.

This was at the end of December 2010 or January 2011, Hayes recalls. That February, Random House announced early retirement for employees over 50.

“I thought that was a sign,” she says. “I decided to start again.”

She developed a plan for opening a bookstore as a cooperative where she would be the general manager. About the same time, Patchett was also considering some angles for getting an independent bookstore back into her city. The two, who did not know each other at the time, were brought together because of an off-hand remark. Patchett was being interviewed by Michael Zibart about her upcoming book, *State of Wonder*, for his publication, *Bookpage*. Zibart’s father had owned one of the city’s long-ago iconic bookstores, Zibart Brothers.

“When Ann was in the [*Bookpage*] offices,” Hayes recounts, “she asked Michael jokingly if he wanted to open a bookstore and he said no, but he knew someone who did. We set up a lunch together, and I invited Mary Grey [James] to join us, since she was friends with both of us.”

Hayes knew James from when they both worked at Ingram, a large book distributor outside Nashville, and she had also been a rep for Harcourt. At the lunch, which was in April 2011, Hayes presented her business plan to Patchett, who liked it, but she didn’t like the idea of a coop. “She said, ‘Why don’t we just do it?’” Hayes recalls. When lunch was over, Parnassus Books was on its way. Hayes took Random House’s early retirement deal, which gave her a salary and health insurance for almost a year.

The hunt for a space began.

Hayes knew the Nashville area well, having grown up there, not far from where the store eventually landed at 3900 Hillsboro Pike in the bustling and upscale Green Hills area of Nashville.

“I had thought of a quiet neighborhood,” she says of where she began her search. “I didn’t think we could afford Green Hills.” A landlord in one location she looked at wouldn’t consider leasing to them because he considered a bookstore too much of a risk. “He thought they were dead,” Hayes says.

They were not looking for a huge space: experience had taught Hayes a few things.

“When I called on independent stores, the ones that lasted were smaller stores in their local communities -- the smaller store that fits the neighborhood and fits the larger community” were the ones that survived, she says. “It has to be grounded where it is first”



When she looked at the 3,150-square-foot space on Hillsboro Road—a former tanning salon no less—she could envision the store there, immediately: “This landlord is very excited about having us here. It’s a great location and has worked out really well.”

Parnassus opened November 16, 2011, in a strip mall with a good mix of ethnic restaurants and small, interesting stores. Hayes’s alma mater, Hillsboro High School, is right out the back door.

Every inch of the store is used deliberately and fully, books shelved along the walls to the ceiling, accessible by rolling ladders like an old library. The spaces are tight in the back where the orders are filled, books are delivered and unpacked, and also where employees heat up their lunches and wash their dishes. Out front, displays of offerings on tables and shelves (many of them purchased from Borders Books on Nashville’s West End Avenue when it went out of business) are scattered the length of the store. This meandering walkway leads to an arch, the entrance to the Children’s section. Suitable for kids and any adult willing to crouch down to get through it, the archway is made with old columns and topped with a huge open book, reminding visitors of the Parthenon. (Adults not wishing to crouch down may also walk around and enter the magical space in an upright position.)

“Karen Davis was a big help to me leading up to the opening of the bookstore,” Hayes says. “She even helped train our staff. I owe a lot to Karen Davis and Thelma Kidd.”

On this afternoon, the store is crawling with customers, many of them children, which Hayes attributed to the after-school story time. Local TV Meteorologist Nancy Van Camp (who was cleaning up popcorn with a broom afterwards) comes every week to read for the event.

“We knew how important it was for Davis-Kidd, so we [focused on that],” Hayes says. “That’s how you grow your readers and customers.” Children’s books are 20 percent

of their sales, Hayes points out.

The old Davis-Kidd (all three of its previous locations, in fact) is within walking distance. Its last space was 30,000 square feet. “We are one-tenth the size of it,” Hayes says. “We’re not trying to be everything to everybody.”

Parnassus is involved in more than 250 events over the course of the year, including some in collaboration with Humanities Tennessee, the Nashville Public Library, and the Nashville Public Library Foundation. That series is called Salon@615.

“When Davis-Kidd closed, Humanities Tennessee and the Public Library realized Nashville needed a venue to keep bringing authors into town,” Hayes says. With all the groups working together, events are held at various large venues, including the Nashville Public Library, Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt, Belmont University, and Hume-Fogg Academic High School.

♦ ♦ ♦

The spotlight has been on Parnassus from the get-go and not just because one of its co-owners is a famous author. It has acted as a barometer for the industry, as people watch to see if a start-up independent bookstore can make it.

About the finances and the store’s viability, Hayes looks almost sheepish, her face spreading into a big smile as if she herself can’t believe that sales were up last year 16 percent.

“We’re doing really well,” she says, “and we were way ahead of target that first year.”

She admits her expectations were conservative, estimating what the store might earn based on Davis-Kidd’s per-square-foot earning and the industry average for stores Parnassus’s size.

“We ended up blowing it away,” Hayes says.

One ingredient to their success is online sales, including the “First Editions Club.” Sign up for it, and they will send a signed first edition to you every month. Among other bestsellers, members of the club have received signed copies of Louise Erdrich’s *Round House*, which won the National Book Award, and Donna Tartt’s *Goldfinch*, which has a Pulitzer to its credit.

“There are times I get overwhelmed with everything,” she says of lifting herself out of the day-to-day to focus on the larger projects. She credits the employees and their hard work, dedication, and knowledge for making the whole enterprise work as well as it does. “I’ve never had a job I have enjoyed so much—and I did enjoy being a sales rep.”

“The store runs smoothly because of them,” Hayes says. “They are intelligent, friendly, and well-read. They are what sets us apart from the chains and online stores. We’ve got a great group of booksellers—and,” she pauses to add, “a great group of dogs.”

The dogs are part of the store’s identity, too. A number of dogs who belong to em-

ployees rotate in and out. On one recent day, Bear was the store dog, wandering around from person to person, waiting patiently for a pat on the head before moving on. "All of our dogs are rescues," Hayes explains. Bear, who now belongs to Assistant Floor Manager Sissy Gardner, came from an older couple who couldn't care for him any more.

"He was despondent," Hayes says. "Coming in here has helped him a lot."

The daily routine is what one might expect of any small business owner. Hayes's hours are "come in early, leave late, work from home," and she estimates she works about 50 hours a week. There are 16 to 20 people employed by the store at any given time, more around Christmas. A survey by the American Booksellers Association reported that in 2012, Parnassus had the equivalent of 10.5 full-time employees.

"We try for all our booksellers to have quality of life outside of work," Hayes says.

The store has a good online presence and in the last year added writer Mary Laura Philpot as "social media maven and editor of *Musing*," an online "laid-back lit journal" (<http://parnassusmusing.net>). Philpot also tweets for the store (follow @ParnassusBooks1). Mary Grey James is the store's manager of books for young readers.

As for the division of labor, Hayes is the one in charge of the store.

"Ann is the outside face of it," Hayes says. Patchett provided funding and has become a spokesperson and champion for independent bookstores nationwide. "With Ann we have a national presence.

"Out-of-town people go out of their way to see it."

Hayes notes that when Patchett does a national interview, as she did on *Fresh Air* or the *Colbert Report*, "it spikes."

"She comes quite often and is involved in our lives. She is definitely a presence here," Hayes says. "On the day-to-day, that's me."

Hayes says her best days in the store are when it is "full of people obviously enjoying themselves and kids running around." She likes it especially when a dog is there and when she gets to meet authors.

What's her worst day at this job? This stops her. In earnest she wrinkles her brow and tries to think of an answer to that. After a moment of digging the corners of her memory, she looks up, smiling: "I can't think what that would be."

Hayes believes they are accomplishing their goals: "We are pretty happy with the direction. If we don't innovate or move on we will all be happy. It's the epitome of what an independent bookstore should be. People are happy. It's like a community center."

"There are things I'd like to do in the future, but we're doing so many great things right now, if we don't do any other new thing we're already ahead of the game." ☐

All Parnassus Photos by Terry Price.

Right: Publishing Veteran Karen Hayes co-owns Parnassus Books, along with bestselling author Ann Patchett.





“Our Play is Preferred”

Theater Bug, Shakespeare Festival Join Forces to Create Shakes Camp!

By Lynne McAlister

The anticipation is palpable, the enthusiasm even tangible. Spectators whisper, folding chairs creak, a nervous ripple, throats clear...quiet. The lights dim, a flutter of music...and a pint size Puck promenades down the center aisle to declare, “What, a play toward! I’ll be an auditor; An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.”

The eager fairies, the hammy mechanicals and the mis-matched lovers are charmingly introduced as they come to life in a one-hour adaptation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Through the magic of theater a storefront in a strip mall becomes a playhouse and the playhouse becomes a forest near Athens.

Welcome to Shakes Camp, a collaboration of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival and The Theater Bug. The Theater Bug is Nashville’s only all youth theater. This thespian twosome has united for the first time this year to perform Shakespeare’s beloved comedy with actors aged from 10 to 14. The performances far exceed what one would expect from children, especially given the brevity of rehearsal time.

In the words of sprightly Cori Anne Laemmel, artistic director and the heart behind The Theater Bug, “Learning Shakespeare seems crazy, learning Shakespeare in a week seems crazier, learning Shakespeare in a week when you are ten is amazing!”

While this isn’t a professional theater it is a theater lead by dedicated professionals. The collaborators met after Thursday’s dress rehearsal in Cori’s bright and compact office (complete with a pink oversized telephone). Along with Cori, Nettie Kraft, the education outreach director for Nashville Shakespeare Festival, and Denice Hicks,

Nashville Shakespeare Festival’s artistic director share the vision behind Shakes Camp.

Nettie observes, “It was really the parents who demanded Shakes Camp. The Shakespeare Festival has a great Apprentice Company, but kids have to be at least 13. We get calls into the office all the time asking for something for the younger folks. We really didn’t have anything to offer until now.”

“It’s important to reach them when they are young before they are told that Shakespeare is hard or boring,” Denice underscores.

When Denice and Nettie pondered over how to fill the gap, The Theater Bug was the obvious solution. Denice, a champion of The Theater Bug from its infancy, says she was excited to contact Cori to see if they could work together to help foster young Shakespearean enthusiasts.

According to Cori, who founded The Theater Bug in 2010, “Opening Theater Bug was a lifelong dream fulfilled!”

She had belonged to a similar children’s theater in her hometown of Santa Cruz, California. Cori says the sense of community that she enjoyed in the children’s theater was immensely influential in her life, ushering her through childhood and ultimately to the professional stage. Although Cori and Nettie agree that most of the young actors will not pursue a career in acting, that’s not the primary goal. Cori stresses the primary goal of The Theater Bug is to build a similar community to the one she enjoyed, a place where everyone is appreciated and young people gain confidence through the performing arts. She says that she totally relates to the one young camper who exclaimed,

"I have found my people!"

How does one build this kind of supportive environment?

Cori whispers, "I don't know how it works, it just works. There is a lot of respect here, and we simply have standards in the way we treat each other."

She explains that the seasoned actors (in regular season The Theatre Bug's actors may be up to 21) set an expectation of behavior, and the younger ones want to impress them. To affirm constructive behavior, awards are given with each production: newcomer, most improved, most valuable player, and most congenial. Staff grants the first three; most congenial is determined by the actors. Each day when the work is concluded the troupe gathers in a 'love circle,' and everyone shares who or what made the day special.

Cori says, "They like to hear their names in a shout-out for being helpful or funny or considerate."

Nettie says, "I've worked with children's theaters around the country, and The Theater Bug actors portray an attitude of professionalism and politeness that is seldom seen."

The young actors agree.

Jack Woods (Oberon), winner of the congeniality award says, "It's just great to be in a place where everyone shares your passion!"

Sarah Feldman (Titania) who has been involved with The Theater Bug since she was nine says, "We all love each other and care about each other, it's my home away from home."

Nettie points out that in addition to creating community and training young actors for the stage, just as significantly, "Cori is fostering future theater practitioners. In a sense she is training the audiences of tomorrow to love theater."

With as much enthusiasm as the youthful thespians, Cori, Nettie, and Denice recount the week's happenings.

Camp really begins on a Friday.

Friday afternoon: The aspiring actors drop by to pick up three potential roles to study over the weekend.

Monday: Morning Auditions. Nettie confides this is the easy part. "Everyone is nervous, restrained, hushed, and eager to impress." Cori agrees: as an accomplished performer herself, she compares adult auditions where there is often a great deal of hesitancy to the ebullient response of the young actors. "Here, when I ask 'who wants to go first' every hand shoots straight up with a chorus of me, me, me!" Casting is Monday afternoon.

Tuesday: First read-through. Nettie continues, "By Tuesday morning, everyone has 50 questions, the energy is full-force, and the excitement is bubbling up and over!"

Wednesday: Rehearsals. By Wednesday they, "own the stage" says Cori. "The little girl who on Monday couldn't believe she was even on stage is totally at-home there by Wednesday afternoon."

Thursday: Rehearsal, rehearsal, director's notes and dress rehearsal. Costume malfunctions and forgotten lines are the norm. Cori points out that, "It's important that we treat them as professional actors. They are people, just small people who deserve the same respect and patience as an adult."

Friday: Anxious moms, dads, grandparents, and The Theater Bug fans gather outside the strip mall door in East Nashville.

"My son is the donkey!" one proud mother exclaims. Another perplexed parent adds, "This is our daughter's first time to try acting. I have no idea why she likes Shakespeare. She didn't get it from us."

Inside on a low proscenium stage with a hand-painted, charming childlike backdrop, one spotlight follows a diminutive Puck who presents the exceedingly eager mechanicals. They introduce the passionate and discombobulated lovers who then in turn bring the audience back to the world of fun-loving fairies all making merry in the forest outside of Athens.

At the final soliloquy, on this midsummer night in a strip mall in East Nashville, there is no need for anything to be mended because certainly no shadows have offended. As the audience erupts in applause, while these visions did appear, absolutely no one slumber'd here. ☐





All Theater Bug Photos by Chelle Greene with Greene Room Photography.



A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare in the Park 2013

As You Like It: Shakespeare in the Park 2014



NSF Photo Gallery

Photos by Jeff Frazier

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival's mission is to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional Shakespearean experiences.

The Festival enriches and unifies our community with bold, innovative, and relevant productions along with empowering, participatory educational programs, setting the community standard of excellence in productions and educational outreach of the works of Shakespeare.





Shakespeare's Case: Summer 2009



Much Ado About Nothing: Shakespeare in the Park 2012

See page 49 for cast credits and photo captions.



The Tempest: Winter Shakespeare 2010



The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

The Taming of the Shrew: Shakespeare in the Park 2009 (featuring The Byron & Beth Smith Apprentice Company)



METRO ARTS

ON PUBLIC ARTS FUNDING:

Four Questions for Jenn Cole, Executive Director of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission

Interview by Rickey Chick Marquardt

Rickey Chick Marquardt: You were appointed executive director of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission (MNAC) in 2010. Your previous positions involved a number of high-profile responsibilities. Among those were orchestration of a nationwide Cities of Service partnership with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, an effort launched by the White House; vice president, Strategy & Partnerships at Hands On Network based in Atlanta, Georgia; and working with Hands On Nashville. In addition, you led a successful organizational development consulting practice, Cole Community Concepts. Just before coming to MNAC you served on Mayor Karl Dean's transition team and were appointed by him to lead flood recovery efforts in May 2010. You have garnered close to 20 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, strategic planning, fundraising, and project management.

You brought a great deal of experience and knowledge to your position as MNAC's executive director. What have you learned since taking the helm that has been most valuable to your continued leadership of the commission?

Jenn Cole: My past roles were in broad civil society/community service organizations. I think this broad view helps me see the arts as a community driver and value verses something retail and only accessible to a few. My background also helps me understand and see the community as an ecosystem of various stakeholders working together with different roles. I hope I've been able to bring that view to Metro Arts and to the larger arts community. I think the most valuable thing I've done at Metro Arts since coming on board is reframe our sense of our internal value/work away from "we give grants" to "we strengthen the ecosystem"...that really provides a broader space for arts policy and really helps the team see the value of their work in a different way.

RCM: A common reaction to the tighter budgets faced by many state and local governments is to reduce funding for the arts. The impact of those cuts is often overlooked or minimized. What is the economic impact for tourism, businesses, government, and private sector jobs when these reductions occur? What are effective ways for those in the community to advocate for continued public support of the arts?

JC: I think the fundamental issue at play often is that arts funding is small compared to other public items in budgets. It seems attractive sometimes to decision leaders to make big cuts in small items. However cuts are often deceptive. Most arts funding in Tennessee goes directly to agencies that are active parts of the economy...one grant

may be for \$10,000 but that \$10k is being leveraged and stretched and matched and expanded by local match. So a cut to arts funding cuts off the ability to leverage private dollars for things that have both economic and social impact at a very micro level. We calculate that our grants alone are directly responsible for 2700 jobs, just in Nashville. That is a lot of jobs....many times we give long term tax credits and other incentives to job relocation by the private sector, but sometimes we don't adequately understand how "soft funding" like grants generate real impact for the economy and for the viewers/audience in terms of public access.

We can't adequately imagine communities without arts. A city without schools, roads, parks is easy to imagine. However, the human spirit creates whether it is funded or not, so often it is hard to frame how funding enhances and deepens the sense of a community because we've always experienced arts as part of a modern, Western city. We have to do a better job of what the absence of creativity looks like if we eliminate the opportunities to push ingenuity...that makes the case more compelling.

RCM: At the time of this writing, nearly a thousand arts supporters from all over the United States are preparing to gather in Nashville for the Americans for the Arts 2014 Annual Convention. Why was Nashville chosen to host this convention, and what are your hopes for the outcome of this convention?

JC: Nashville was chosen because it is a city with a wide variety of art genres, a high degree of arts leadership in the arts community, academic community, and public sector. It is also pretty easy to get to, and our weather is pretty good in June.

I hope that participants leave with a deeper sense of Nashville. Our city is one that is easy to commoditize or frame as slightly ironic. I think we have deep, deep roots in creative collaboration across agencies and genres, we have a high degree of innovation—particularly in audience outreach, and we just have dynamic artists, makers, and agencies. I hope folks hear some great music, but I want their ears ringing with our theatre, film, dance, visual arts, and maker scene...I want them to want to come back for more.

Note: Highlights of the American for the Arts 2014 Convention can be found online at: <http://convention.artsusa.org/>

RCM: According to the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), “The greater Nashville region is poised to grow by leaps and bounds over the next couple of decades. Across the 10-county Cumberland Region around Nashville, the MPO forecasts close to another million people by the year 2035. Where those people will live, work, and play and the socio-economic characteristics of those folks will significantly influence the need for investments into our region’s roads, transit, and walking, and bicycling infrastructure.”

What is the vision for the role of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission as this growth occurs? What does our city need to do in order to ensure that it remains a thriving artistic community during this time?

JC: You’ve probably seen our white paper on this topic. It lays out a pretty clear vision. We’ve been part of a 20-person Arts, Culture, Creativity resource team that includes artists, business leaders, academics, and agency leaders working with the planning department to frame core goals and strategies for Nashville’s cultural growth that parallels the region’s growth. We are still working on details, but I’m really proud that we’ve emerged with four key goals that really get to the foundation of good cultural policy:

- * Nashvillians embrace arts education and life-long cultural literacy as a critical value.

- * Nashville has thriving creative and cultural districts dispersed across the region.

- * Every Nashvillian has access to opportunities to participate in the arts and cultural activities.

- * Nashville artists and creative entrepreneurs have clear pathways to grow their professional practices and businesses.

If over the next 18 months we can spell out specific, actionable strategies that the community can reach consensus on that support these areas, we will go a long way to make decisions that support the long term development and strength of the arts sector.

Note: The Nashville Arts and Cultural Background Report is available on line at: <http://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Planning/docs/NashvilleNext/Arts%20and%20Culture%20Background%20Report%20-%20March%208%20final.pdf> ↗



TOP: Photo courtesy of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission



TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION

Cultivate. Create. Participate.

ON PUBLIC ARTS FUNDING:

Four Questions for Anne B. Pope, Executive Director, Tennessee Arts Commission

Interview by Rickey Chick Marquardt

Rickey Chick Marquardt: You were appointed in 2012 to lead The Tennessee Arts Commission as the executive director with a wealth of experience in not only many areas of government, but in the private sector as well. You had previously served as the executive director of the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network, a priority of the Tennessee First to the Top Initiative, designed to promote and expand the teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in K-12 public schools across Tennessee. Prior to that, you served as federal co-chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission, a federal economic and community development agency. You also served as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and as executive director of the Tennessee Film, Entertainment, and Music Commission. In the private sector, you served as president/CEO of a chain of department stores located in northeast Tennessee. You are a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University.

With your wide range of experience, you have a unique perspective on the importance of the arts to the quality of life in our state. What is the most significant impact the Tennessee Arts Commission has had on the quality of life for Tennesseans?

Anne B. Pope: The most significant impact that the Tennessee Arts Commission has and continues to have is the investments in our state's arts and cultural assets that benefit our communities and schools. Few states compare to Tennessee for the quality, breadth, and diversity of the arts and culture. The arts positively impact communities all across our state including improving quality of life, adding to our state's economy, and helping to provide a more balanced education for our children. The arts are often the glue that holds communities together and preserve the traditions that help define who we are as Tennesseans.

RCM: The Commission has a wide variety of programs and educational opportunities, one of which is the "Create2014: Creativity in Education Institute," occurring this year in June. Tell us about Create, and what you hope it will accomplish.

ABP: The mission of the Arts Education program is to enrich and support quality arts education. The Tennessee Arts Commission recognizes the continuum of experiential and exposure-based opportunities through such programs as the Creativity in Education Institute (CREATE).

Create is an annual arts integration conference, and this year's conference is about moving "Full STEAM Ahead" in education. STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math plus the Arts – supports an integrated curriculum in which subjects are not taught in isolation. Create 2014 recognizes the significance of the arts in building 21st century learning skills while shaping whole school reform through project-based learning. Approximately 300 educators from across the state will come together to understand how subjects like science and engineering connect with arts and design. The outcome is to move education forward with enthusiasm and determination to provide students with the tools they need for real-world application. This year, over 100,000 Tennessee K-12 public school students will have access to arts education and arts integrated learning as a result of the Create conference.

Note: Information about the "Create2014: Creativity in Education Institute" can be found online at: <http://tn.gov/arts/create2014.html>

RCM: Tennessee has a successful Specialty License Plate program. Tell us about that program and how it helps fund the arts in Tennessee.

ABP: In Tennessee when you purchase certain specialty license plates, a portion of the proceeds supports the arts. The Specialty License Plate Program was created in the 1980s to provide a dedicated revenue source for arts and cultural activities in the state.

Specialty License Plate funding provides local arts programming for children and communities distributed through the Tennessee Arts Commission. Last year, over \$6.3 million was invested in nonprofit organizations, K-12 public schools, and artists across the state. Of that \$6.3 million, \$4.5 million was generated through the sale of specialty license plates. In an age when every dollar counts, there has never been a better opportunity for art supporters to back the arts with a specialty license plate.

A specialty license plate costs \$35 each year, and there are over 100 to choose from. The Tennessee Arts Commission now has four license plates of its own with the addition of the new Arts plate, and 90% of the cost of these plates directly funds the arts in communities and schools across the state.

Note: Information about the Specialty License Plate program can be found online at: <http://www.tn.gov/arts/SpecialtyPlatePrgm.htm>

RCM: When the Tennessee Arts Commission was created in 1967, it was given a special mandate by the Tennessee General Assembly to stimulate and encourage the presentation of performing, visual, and literary arts throughout the state and to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of Tennessee. The Commission encourages excellence in artistic expression through the state's artists and arts organizations. That commitment through the years has ensured that the citizens of Tennessee have access to, and the opportunity to participate in, the arts.

The Tennessee Arts Commission is scheduled to publish its new Strategic Plan in October of 2014. During the planning period, the staff and commission members:

- * Held community conversations in Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Jackson, and Tri-Cities
- * Held legislator and executive branch meetings
- * Met with designated agencies
- * Conducted strategic planning sessions with constituents in their disciplines
- * Conducted non-arts community leader conversations
- * Conducted a statewide survey
- * Held four regional strategic planning public meetings

What stands out to you as the most important message the people of Tennessee have for our government leaders about the importance of public funding for the arts?

ABP: Tennessee's creative enterprises and workforce add significant value to the state's economy and Tennessee communities. The Tennessee Arts Commission has a unique relationship with nonprofit arts and cultural organizations that make up a key sector of Tennessee's creative economy. The 2012 National Governors Association report "New Engines of Growth: Arts, Culture and Design" describes five ways the arts can contribute to economic growth, including: provide a fast-growth, dynamic industry cluster; help mature industries become more competitive; provide the critical ingredients for innovative places; catalyze community revitalization; and deliver a better-prepared workforce.

A balanced education includes the arts. Students who have access to arts education are better prepared for school, work, and life. National research shows that students who participate in the arts score higher on standardized tests, are more likely to graduate high school, and develop important skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. Furthermore, arts education fosters community engagement, social development, and cross-cultural understanding—preparing students for a global society. Yet, there are discrepancies in the access to and the quality of arts education in Tennessee. Among the arts organizations surveyed in our strategic plan, 88% stated that not all children in Tennessee have access to a high quality arts education. As the Tennessee Arts Commission works with educators and community arts providers to increase access, public funding for the arts is essential to ensure students have the opportunity for growth and success.

Additionally, the Tennessee Arts Commission can highlight the everyday role of the arts in generating other public benefits for com-



munities, including community cohesion and pride, increased public health and safety, successful strategies to address tough community problems, and celebration of the essential virtues and values that make us who we are as Tennesseans. □

TOP: Photo courtesy of the Tennessee Arts Commission

The Making of a One Man Show

Ray Zimmerman Interviews Jim Pfitzer

Jim Pfitzer was already a successful storyteller when he developed *Aldo Leopold: A Standard of Change* and took it to audiences across the country. Positive audience response is not surprising, given his passion for the content and the art of his performance. He recites portions of Leopold's book, *A Sand County Almanac*, and gives us an in depth picture of how The Land Ethic came into being.

Ray Zimmerman: Aldo Leopold (1887 – 1948) is best known to conservationists for his book, *A Sand County Almanac*. Aside from that book, what is the significance of Aldo Leopold?

Jim Pfitzer: I guess wilderness would be a good place to start...

Twenty years before the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, Aldo Leopold pushed for the world's first designated wilderness area in the Gila National Forest of SW New Mexico. Part of that wilderness now bears his name.

In restoration, Leopold is unrivaled. He was behind the first two prairie restorations--one of them at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, the other on his farm in central Wisconsin where he relocated large pieces of sod he would cut and transport on the roof of his car. He also planted around 40,000 pine trees on that property, rebuilding a forest.

We are only recently coming to understand the impact of Leopold's detailed phenological records. He recorded the daily goings on of countless species--the first blooms of flowers in the spring, the arrivals and departures of migratory birds. These records are vital today in helping scientists understand the effects of global climate change.

For me, though, perhaps the most important thing Leopold did was publicly admit when he was wrong. After years of supporting predator eradication in the west, Leopold saw the devastating effects on the landscape of too many deer and elk. In response to this, he explained his error and began advocating for predator reintroduction, as he expressed in his essay, "Thinking Like a Mountain."

I could go on...

RZ: Before he developed the play, Pfitzer was already reciting "Thinking like a Mountain." He de-scribed his first recitation.

JP: It was a terrible sound (system), in a horrible space, with a small audience, but the people were moved. The next morning I got up and said, "OK, this is it. I'm telling a Leopold story, and I'm building it around that essay." At that point in time, I had no idea what that story was going to look like. I didn't know much about Leopold the man. I was only familiar with the small collection of essays in *A Sand County Almanac*.

RZ: Did your visits to the Leopold Foundation headquarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin help you develop the project?

JP: The Aldo Leopold Foundation has been great. They were a little skeptical of me at first, but after we got to know each other and they saw me perform, they warmed up and gave me a lot of support. When I was in Baraboo researching they let me use an office, gave me ac-

cess to their library which holds a lot of Leopold's personal books, and introduced me to the archivist at the UW library which holds Leopold's manuscripts.

As I developed the play, staff members were very open about what they wanted, and didn't want included. For me, it was important to me to tell a story that was in keeping with their vision and mission, and I made a lot of revisions to the script based on their input.

Perhaps the greatest gift they gave me was an opportunity to spend multiple nights in Leopold's shack. I was nervous about staying in a national historic landmark whose only heat is a very poorly constructed fireplace, but they insisted that I build a fire and be comfortable there.

It was my first evening in the shack when I heard Sandhill Cranes flying overhead and ran to the river to see them. That and a series of other events there led to the basic through line of the play revealing itself. I woke up at 3:00 the next morning, stoked the fire, lit a lamp, and couldn't write fast enough to get it all down.

RZ: Where have you performed the play?

JP: I have been to several universities and conservation-oriented conferences. The play followed by a discussion makes for a nice keynote address for the right event. One of the more curious places I have performed is the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. I didn't draw nearly as many folks as Paul McCartney, but people who did turn out for my morning performances were enthusiastic. The Bonnaroo performances resulted in several bookings. I learned that people who get up early at Bonnaroo mean business.

My most memorable performance thus far was at the Geography of Hope Conference in Pt. Reyes, CA in the spring of 2013, where I performed a

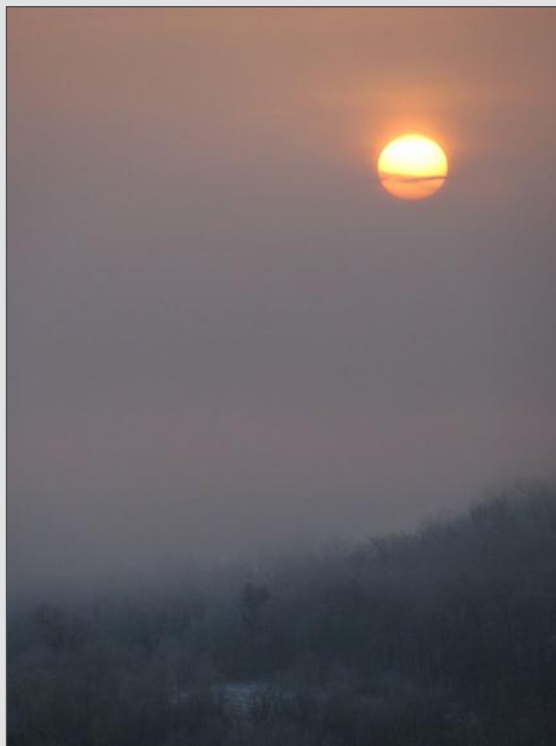
short excerpt from the play at the end of a banquet. They seated me across the head table from Estella Leopold, Aldo's last surviving offspring. When I took the stage, I was too nervous to look at her.

The performance went well, and when I returned to my seat I saw that Estella had been crying. I walked around the table and gave her a hug, and she whispered in my ear that she had seen a lot of people try to be her father and that she liked the way I did it. That was all I needed to hear. I thought that if I never got a chance to perform the show again, it was worth all the hard work just to move Aldo's baby girl that way.

Later, after the banquet, she pulled me aside and gave me a little bit of information about her father that I haven't found written anywhere--a personal tidbit that I have since added to the play. ☐

To see a schedule of performances and learn more about Aldo Leopold, Jim Pfitzer, and the show, visit his web page at www.astandardofchange.com

Above: Photo by Gayle Edlin





From Sweden: Our Dispatch Reports in from the Aurora Borealis

Away from English

by Jennifer Palley

Living abroad for 16 years has taken a bit of a toll on my English. The expat life has cut me off from so much: family, old friends, familiar surroundings, favorite dishes, and my native language. The English I speak and write today is impacted by my move across the pond. In a way, my English comprehension and expression have stood still since my move many, many years ago.

The way I express myself now is not the same as if I had stayed in my native Canada. Instead, I live in Sweden, a country where I often converse in a language that is not my own, or I converse in my own language but with non-native speakers.

Not to mention, language is such an integral part of culture. To feel like I still somewhat belong in Canada, I must keep up with how English is evolving in my prior part of the world. The Internet has made this easier, but going online is not quite the same as being immersed in the language all the time. Don't get me wrong. I hear and use English daily. But it's not the same, and keeping my English current is a bit of a challenge.

On my most recent trip home a few months ago, my sister used the word "ratchet" a couple of times. I've heard the term, but in a completely different context. To me, "ratchet" is a tool, a device. Word usage is such a personal thing that I assumed it was one of my sister's quirky expressions. Until I heard someone else use it. Then I heard "ratchet" used on the radio.

While this word is one that I do not foresee myself using, it is interesting to keep my ear open to these new terms. Fortunately, Sweden doesn't dub movies or shows, so anything that has been recorded in English is in tact (but with Swedish subtitles), and this also helps keep me abreast of the latest vogue words and phrases. So I know all about twerking, selfies, chillaxing, and noobs.

In spite of the Internet, much of my English is somewhat frozen in time, to when I left Edmonton. Streets and places there have been renamed. Though I'm familiar with the new names, when I have to refer to the streets and places, I often use the old names out of habit. It makes me feel outdated.

Another aspect is that I tend to simplify my English when I need to

converse with others. A good portion of the people I deal with professionally have English as a second language. While a few of them are nearly fluent, many have just a rudimentary grasp of the language. This varying degree of proficiency means that I never know whom my audience is, and to be certain that I get my point across, I tend to dumb things down a bit.

An undesired side effect of this is that my vocabulary is now quite limited. Writing and editing technical subjects helps combat this to some degree, but it cannot beat being surrounded by English all day long. It happens quite often, when reading, that I come across a word or a phrase and think to myself, "Wow, I haven't heard that term in a long time!"

Also, I tend to avoid using words that only a fellow Canadian would understand, such as "toque" (a knitted cap), or words that are common in the part of Canada I'm from, such as "pop" (soda).

At times I find myself second guessing phrases and words. (Is it "knock on wood" or "touch wood?" Is that really how you spell "colonel?") Thank goodness for Google!

Yet another problem I'm facing now is that the Swedish is slowly polluting my English. I am glad I am fluent in the language spoken here, but not to the point where it is jeopardizing my command of my mother tongue. The mistakes I used to tease my Swedish husband about, I find myself doing now. For instance, I have referred to prescriptions as "receipts" (the Swedish word for prescription is "recept").

I converse with other English-speaking expats about Swedish phenomena, and then it's quite natural to use the Swedish terms rather than the English. In other cases, the Swedish word is more accessible somehow. In an e-mail to my family back home, I wrote about speaking to a "mäklare." I'm not sure why, but I find that easier to say than the English "realtor," and so it crept into my message.

Living in Sweden has changed my English, but I wouldn't trade this experience for the world. The most important thing is that I get my point across. And I think I do. ☑

ABOVE: Aurora Borealis over snowy mountain in Sweden



Photo by Luke Seward

Looking for Lilith in Louisville

By Mary Popham

Looking for Lilith Theatre is a jewel case of productions awaiting the stage from Louisville, Kentucky. Its topics are reexamined through the sensibilities of women and includes education, ravages of war, hunger and health, cyber bullying of teens, suicide, and finding similarity in issues of women from different cultures—rural Guatemala and urban America.

Usually a start-up theatre company will have its beginnings in a mid-sized city like Louisville and move its headquarters to Broadway. Looking for Lilith reversed the process. During its first five or six years, their productions premiered in NYC and then toured Louisville, the hometown of its artistic director, Shannon Woolley Allison. The company also includes PR & Marketing Director Trina Fischer and Community Outreach Director Jennifer Thalman Kepler. As these women began families, they relocated to Louisville while retaining their New York connection.

Looking For Lilith, the professional woman's ensemble, came about in 2001 after Shannon had left school and began working in NYC theatre companies. Often being the only woman in the company, she was not satisfied with how the views of women were portrayed. Aspiring to start her own group, she contacted her good friend, Trina, who had worked for a year in the Apprentice/Intern Company for Actors Theatre of Louisville.

Trina was also looking for something

more than traditional theatre and had told Shannon about Alternate ROOTS (Originally an acronym for Regional Organization of Theaters South.) Founded in 1976, the association's mission is "to support the creation and presentation of original art, in all its forms, which is rooted in a particular community of place, tradition or spirit."

Shannon and Trina partnered with Alternate ROOTS, devised and presented excerpts of their own works of artistic social value, and Looking for Lilith Theatre was born. The name is inspired by the traditional story of Lilith, Adam's first wife who left him after refusing to be subservient to him. Because Lilith has mostly been lost to history, her name exemplifies the need to examine oral and written histories of women, to document their experiences. Not confined to women of the past, the company also outreaches to present day women who are in economic or societal difficulties, whether white or of color, American or immigrant, disabled or otherwise disadvantaged.

In 2004 LFL created "Faith Stories Project" in Guatemala based on the need found there by company member, Jennifer Thalman Kepler. Most of the women who come to the program are active in their churches. As they talk about their faith, LFL embodies their stories, releases their voices. For example, a great concern in a patriarchal society is the difficulty of women talking to doctors. The program creates a short scene demonstrat-

ing the situation as it is and progresses to a scene as the ideal.

The Guatemalan women want to know about nutrition and learn that by adding green vegetables to beans and rice, they get a relatively balanced diet. They want to take on domestic violence, to navigate the social and structural issues that make prosecution difficult. Once these women know they have the skills to handle problems, they are fierce.

Looking for Lilith produced an original work, *Class of '70*, in 2004 which celebrates social and political changes that women experienced when "the spirit of liberation gripped the youth of America." They won acclaim in 2006 for *Women Speak: IRAQ*, which responds to women veterans of our armed forces who are seldom heard about in mainstream audiences; the woman veteran is fundamentally ignored. Performed in a one-woman show by their artistic director, Shannon Woolley, and directed by Kelly McNerney, LFL's fourth original production toured colleges and conferences. Shannon speaks in the voices of women affected by modern warfare: the female soldiers, loved ones at home, the Iraqi women with the same concerns. They premiered their first commissioned work in 2009 based on methods of Forum Theatre (an innovative theatre for teaching women and men how to change their world.) *Choices*, an interactive play, focuses on cyber bullying and teen suicide.

►► Continued on Page 40

Review: *When Shadows Fall*

By Candace White

A voice from beyond sanity. A voice from the dead. A voice of evil. A voice of reason. A voice of love. A voice of protection. These are the voices that speak to the reader in the *New York Times* bestselling author J.T. Ellison's novel, *When Shadows Fall*. These are the voices that call to Dr. Samantha Owens, who has chosen a simpler life away from the drama and pain of the past, a new life as head of the Forensic Pathology Department at Georgetown University Medical School in Washington, D.C.

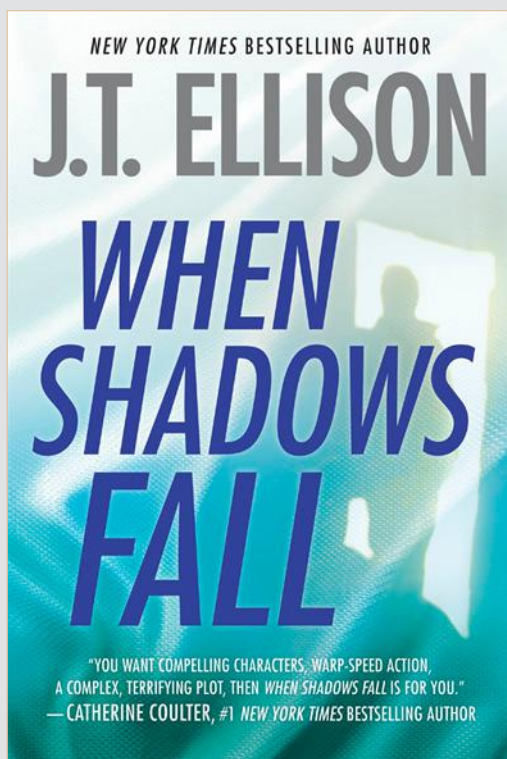
Dr. Owens has chosen a teaching life, away from fighting crime as the chief medical examiner for the State of Tennessee. Away from Nashville, the city that reminds her every day that her family is gone. A calm life, where a new love has started and helps to ease the past. But all these voices call her back to what she does best—tracking down the answers to a suicide that is a murder and a child abduction that is a mirror, a mirror of many other child abductions back through time.

When Shadows Fall is a character-driven narrative that delves deep into the psychosis of evil, putting the reader inside the mind of a controlling self-proclaimed demi-god, an insane murderer, as well as inside the mind of a victim, barely holding on to sanity. J.T. Ellison uses these characters to keep readers off balance from the prologue to the final reeling conclusion. She manages to put those same readers inside the mind of insanity and evil, then pulls back to reason in the next chapter, as Dr. Owens begins her incisive quest to unravel the tangled web of bizarre interconnected crimes dating back more than twenty years. Crimes that on the surface don't seem to have anything to do with each other. Crimes the F.B.I. has known about and kept to themselves. Crimes that involve seven other child abductions with twenty other bizarre murders and a rogue F.B.I. agent who might be responsible.

J.T. Ellison has created a smart, strong female protagonist in Dr. Samantha Owens, one who is intimately humanized as she fights her own internal conflicts. But the author never lets her readers forget that Dr. Owens is an accomplished and superlative investigator, a pathologist who allows the dead to tell their final stories. This is a furious-paced mystery studded with heinous murders and truths uncovered out of the past that will have you reading long into the night, just so you can know how it ends. And when you think it's over, *When Shadows Fall* will sneak around the corner out of the dark and knock you down with one final blow. ▢

About JT

J.T. Ellison is the *New York Times* bestselling author of several critically acclaimed novels, including *The Final Cut* with Catherine Coulter, *When Shadows Fall*, *Edge of Black*, and *A Deeper Darkness*. Her work has been published in over twenty countries. Her novel *The Cold Room* won the ITW Thriller Award for Best Paperback Original, and *Where All The Dead Lie* was a RITA® Nominee for Best Romantic Suspense. She lives in Nashville with her husband. Visit JTEllison.com for more insight into her wicked imagination, or follow her on Twitter @Thrillerchick or Facebook.com/JTEllison14.



TOP: JT's Photo by Chris Blanz

The scene takes us up to the time before Hannah has reached out to anybody and is about to take pills. Then a facilitator asks the audience what help could be given to Hannah. Ideas from the audience are incorporated, and in a process of intervention, the audience advises Hannah.

Professional theatre director Kathi E. B. Ellis joined LFL and directed *What My Hands Have Touched: U.S. Women in WWII*. Retelling real-life stories of real American women, the production praises women's contributions while presenting the realities of wartime. Kathi also directed *Women of Will*, a selection of Shakespearean scenes featuring his female characters, and another LFL original production, *Fabric, Flames, and Fervor: Girls of the Triangle*. The company returned to NYC in March 2011 for the Centennial Remembrances of the Triangle Fire, performing at Manhattan Theatre Source, three blocks from the fire that had

killed 146 people in the original factory.

At present, as Looking for Lilith wraps up their 12th season, they have a dozen company members, plus a lot of part-timers. Along with mainstage and touring productions they've also established after-school drama programs, workshops, and summer camps. The outreach to Guatemala has grown exponentially and involves more local collaboration. The company's goal is to bring the Guatemalan women to Kentucky to show our home communities, especially the Latino population, what is being done there.

Looking for Lilith Theatre makes a difference. ☐



Photo by Luke Seward

The Porch Writers' Collective "Sense of Place" Weekend Workshop at Rivendell Writers' Colony

By Katie McDougall

"The Porch Retreat to Rivendell was the perfect escape - an opportunity to be with other writers, drink from the well of their collective wisdom, and enjoy the serene and inspiring environment. I expected bunk beds and a cafeteria and was instead awed by a gorgeous property and luxurious accommodations and meals. If I didn't know I could come back next year, they'd have had to pry my fingers from the doorframe to get me to leave."

- Abby Hollingsworth, Sense of Place Workshop Participant

Early morning fog rises from Lost Cove and hangs lazily upon the treetops outside Rivendell Writers' Colony. From the windows of the charming manor, the world could be a brand new place, no sign of civilization, born of tree, sky, and serenity. For its beauty, for its rich literary heritage, it is a special place. And now, too, it is special to the eleven of us who convened for a weekend in May for The Porch Writers' Collective's inaugural "Sense of Place" weekend writing retreat.

True confession. The retreat was entitled "Sense of Place" because I had in my closet ninety-six purple water bottles emblazoned with "Sense of Place Workshops," the remains of a previous, unrealized career of coordinating writing workshops in beautiful places. Water bottles aside, the title proved apropos; Rivendell engenders nothing if not sense of place. To rest a spell on the stone bench that overlooks the lush valley—that is sense of place. Or perhaps to perch on the metal chair that sits on the dock in the center of the small, lily-padded pond—that is sense of place. Or to gaze out of the windows over the myriad writing desks throughout the house, to share cocktails and conversation on the open aired turret, to lie in the hammock with a book, to walk less than a mile to Natural Bridge, to eat meals at a long table in the low-lit rustic dining room with its bronze Remington cowboy sculpture tucked in the corner, to sleep in charming bedrooms named after American literary heroes (Faulkner, O'Conner, Hemingway, Percy, Thoreau)—all these evoke a profound sense of place.

The Rivendell Writers' Colony was founded in 2013 after Nashvillian Mary Elizabeth Nelson renovated the property, creating an idyllic space for it to become... something. Happily, that "something" took shape as a writers' colony. Adjacent to Brinkwood, once home to William Alexander Percy and his nephew Walker Percy, and down the road from the Sewanee campus, Rivendell is steeped in a



heritage of letters. The writers' colony, which places an emphasis on mind, body, and spirit, provides residencies and fellowships for writers and authors, as well as "guest stays" for readers and those who love the land. Guests of Rivendell can't help but be inspired by its sublime beauty and its literary spirit.

The Porch Writer's Collective, also nascent, "soft-launched" in January 2014. Porch founder Susannah Felts, a Nashville native, had been teaching fiction workshops both at Watkins and through her own business, The Nashville Story Studio. It had long been her dream to grow her talents and services into something larger, something more akin to Boston's Grub Street, Minneapolis's Loft, or Chicago's Story Studio. As a member of Susannah's writing group, I shared Susannah's enthusiasm for this vision and when she invited me to be a cofounder, I leapt on-board eagerly. Having spent fifteen years as a classroom English teacher and an early morning fiction writer, I sought a shift in career which would allow me a more writing-centric life as well as a way to utilize my passions for teaching and coordinating inspiring experiences. From our shared interests, The Porch Writers' Collective was born. Perhaps, too, the time was right given Nashville's ever-growing creative class. Through writing workshops, innovative literary events and collaborations, youth programming and community outreach, and, of course, writing retreats, The Porch aspires to further enrich the literary culture of Nashville.

The Rivendell Writers' Colony and The Porch Writers' Collective made for a perfect marriage as both are nonprofit organizations whose missions carry a charge to foster writers, providing them space, tools, inspiration, and community. Of our inaugural retreat, participant Angela Hoke wrote, "The Porch Writers' Retreat at Rivendell was an exceptional experience, bringing writers together in an intimate exchange of advice, craft and instruction, and fellowship. The setting

(consisting of charming accommodations on an idyllic mountain bluff) and good food and wine only enhanced the weekend. But I'm mostly excited about the relationships forged with the lovely women I met (this retreat happened to be all women), and look forward to the benefits of my expanded network of writer friends."

From all reports, this positive response was unanimous. Attracting an all-women's group had never been our intention, but as it was, the female camaraderie added to the spirit of the weekend, especially as the retreat happened to coincide with Mother's Day. Many of the group were mothers, and all of us were daughters, inspiring the exchange of many wonderful stories and heartfelt well-wishing.

One moon later, I still smile at our many highlights: the festive first night of feasting on jambalaya and playing "writing games;" perfect spring weather that shone down upon our Saturday "craft conversation" on the patio; the writing group that formed spontaneously in the corner of the living room; the tour of the gardens offered by Michael Thompson, husband to managing director of Rivendell, Carmen Toussaint-Thompson, (both of whom, by the way, are about the kindest, most soulful people you'll ever meet); Saturday evening cocktails on the turret of the old manor house; Susannah's Sunday morning "sense of place" workshop on the screened-in porch at the Brinkwood cabin; and perhaps, as much as anything, the soft, happy sound of busy scribes putting fingers to keyboard, pen to paper.

Note: Readers interested in The Porch's fall retreat at Rivendell planned for November or other Porch offerings should contact us on our website: porchtn.org ☐

TOP: Photo courtesy of The University of the South

Capturing Enigma

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Doug Wright debuts his new drama at the Ingram New Works Festival in Nashville

By Cal Fuller and Chapter16.org

Among theater-lovers, celebrated playwright Doug Wright is best known for *I Am My Own Wife*, which won both a Tony Award for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize—a play that Wright has called the “portrait of an enigma.” But he is also author of such diverse works as *Quills* (his Obie-winning play about the Marquis de Sade) and the Broadway version of *The Little Mermaid*. In his latest play, *Posterity*, which debuted in May for the Ingram New Works Festival at Tennessee Repertory Theatre in Nashville, Wright offers a thoughtful look at a pair of remarkable artists concerned with their own legacies.

In Henrik Ibsen, Wright has discovered another enigma, and he beautifully dramatizes the contradictions in the life and work of this brilliant playwright. Wright’s Ibsen, the father of dramatic realism, is at the end of his life, and the City of Oslo has commissioned a bust of him by Gustav Vigeland, a sculptor. Vigeland is uneasy about accepting the commission—Ibsen is notoriously difficult—but the prestige of creating the last permanent bust of Norway’s most revered citizen wins out over the unpleasant personality of the subject. Vigeland knows that Ibsen’s bust could immortalize both the author and the sculptor. More importantly, he feels certain it will lead to more commissions. In other words, Vigeland is networking. The clashing egos of these two artists create much of the play’s dramatic tension, and their verbal battles do not disappoint.

Prior to his participation in the Ingram New Works Festival in Nashville, Doug Wright answered questions from Chapter 16 via email.

Chapter 16: In conceiving *Posterity*, which scene did you imagine first?

Doug Wright: I was visiting the studio of the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland in Oslo, which has now been transformed into a museum. I stumbled across six plaster studies the artist made for a proposed bust of Henrik Ibsen. The first was robust, with full mutton-chops, and Ibsen’s expression was one of furious consternation. In the second, Ibsen looked smaller somehow, and less angry. In the third, his hair had thinned and his cheeks were hollow. The sixth and last was little more than a death mask. I subsequently learned that the great playwright had agreed to sit for Vigeland, but after their first meeting he suffered a stroke. Every time Vigeland would arrive at Ibsen’s apartment in Arbiensgate, Ibsen’s physiognomy had changed. Illness was quite literally ravaging his face. Regrettably, the sculptor was never able to finalize the bust, but he ended up with something even more remarkable: a record of one of the nineteenth century’s most influential writers marching toward his own grave. I can’t say I imagined a scene per se, but when I saw those six plaster likenesses, I knew I’d discovered a subject for a play.

Chapter 16: Although you haven’t written *Posterity* in the documentary style of *I Am My Own Wife*, research clearly played a very important part in the writing process. What sort of research was involved?

Wright: I travelled to Norway several times to study Vigeland’s work. Obviously, I’ve been spending a lot of time with Ibsen’s oeuvre, and the notable texts about him, from George Bernard Shaw’s famous appreciation to the masterful biography by Michael Meyer. And I’ve been working with a terrific Ibsen Scholar named Yoni Oppenheim; he actually has a degree from Norway in Ibsen Studies! He’s been an invaluable guide and has steered me toward the most influential and informative texts. Of course, at the end of the day, the play isn’t meant

as nonfiction; it’s my own meditation on art and legacy and perhaps even death itself. So at some point I have to let my imagination fly.

Chapter 16: What challenges and surprises arose when trying to tell the story of a visual artist (especially a sculptor) through the tools of the stage?

Wright: I had to learn certain rudiments of the craft, like the way armatures work, and the various grades of clay available to artists. Vigeland’s work poses a particular challenge because many of his sculptures are massive; several times bigger than life-size. In the actual production of the play, I’d like to have some of those enormous works visible onstage. Suffice it to say, it’s a potential feast for a great team of designers.

Chapter 16: You give Ibsen the opportunity to consider the “perils of the profession” a century ago. Any twenty-first-century “perils” of play-writing you’d be willing to share?

Wright: As challenging as it was for Ibsen, at least he was able to earn a living from his plays. In fact, by the end of his life, he was relatively wealthy. Unfortunately in our era, playwriting has become a hobby for most of us. We earn a living writing for film or television, then carve out sacrosanct time to pen plays. Who underwrites the American Theatre? Frankly, it’s the people who work in it. I know actors who slave away off-Broadway for four hundred dollars a week and make ends meet with residuals from TV commercials. Acting, writing, directing—they are rarely tenable professions these days, unless you’re wildly successful. Let’s face it: the theater is kept alive by diehard enthusiasts, impetuous dreamers and feverish, heartfelt aesthetes—the very people, I daresay, who work at Tennessee Rep!

Chapter 16: In *Posterity*, Ibsen describes the playwright’s job as both “ghastly” and “illuminating.” In your view, how has the role of the playwright changed since 1901?

Wright: Plays used to lie at the center of aesthetic and social discourse; they were the popular culture of their day. Playwrights were commentators on the mores, the politics and the burning social issues of the moment, and audiences made a habit of seeing the latest noteworthy work by their favorite scribes. Now, it all too often seems that playwrights are as relevant to the zeitgeist as Gothic stone carvers or candle-makers. If you say you’re a playwright at a cocktail party, people are usually somewhat baffled; it’s like saying you work in stained glass.

Meanwhile, attending the theater is no longer something that every cultured or engaged person does; it’s a once-a-year event on Mother’s Day, or a way to celebrate a particularly ominous birthday. The audience demographic is becoming increasingly stagnant. And as ticket prices climb ever higher, the theater becomes increasingly rarified, available only for a cultured few. That’s when it begins to lose its relevance in the larger sphere. Producing theater stops feeling vital and immediate, and starts to feel akin to curating a museum.

Chapter 16: In a small cast, you manage to show artists from three different generations. What has been the most important legacy you’ve inherited, and what would you like your own legacy to be?

Wright: I'm not being cheeky or flip when I say that if I knew the answers to those questions, I wouldn't feel the overwhelming need to write this play. When we choose a particular topic to investigate as writers, we're always interested in our ostensible subject: the life of Ibsen, the life of Vigeland, their prophetic meeting, etc.—but we're also writing in hopes of answering the vexing questions that lurk in our own hearts. Is my work a sufficient legacy to leave behind, in the absence of children? Will it weather the years beyond me? Does it connote a life well lived? I'm haunted by these queries; I think we all are. Hopefully, they give the play resonance.

Chapter 16: As foils, Ibsen and Vigeland often point out each other's contradictions. Do you see these contradictions in any way as universal symptoms of the human condition?

Wright: Young writers often worry if their characters are written consistently; as we get older, we learn that people are rarely—if ever—truly consistent. We are the sum of our contradictions. Ibsen himself wrote one of the most maddeningly inconsistent, impetuous, contradictory characters in all of Western literature: Hedda Gabler. Actresses have been trying to figure her out for well over a hundred years. It's her irreconcilability that makes her fascinating and allows her to endure multiple interpretations over many, many productions. In truly great writing, characters are as hard to pigeonhole on the page as they are in life. No one is simple.

Chapter 16: At this point in the process, how is the workshop environment helpful for a new work?

Wright: The role of any workshop is the same; you enter the rehearsal room with not one but two plays. The first is the brilliant, seamless, and shattering play that exists in your mind. The second is the play that's actually written on the page: often morose and unhappy scribbles unfettered by either reason or artistry. The purpose of the workshop is to bring those two very different scripts into accord. I'm grateful to the formidable artistic minds at Tennessee Rep for giving me this tremendous opportunity. They're going to teach me exactly what it is that I have written, and I'm very eager to learn.

For more local book coverage, please visit Chapter16.org, an online publication of Humanities Tennessee. □



Press Release: *Funky, fun rhymes fill Emmy-nominated songwriter's book for kids*

Jeff Crossan's *I Ate a Cicada Today* includes colorful illustrations, CD for singing along

When a flying cicada struck award-winning songwriter Jeff Crossan on the mouth on his way into a restaurant, he joked to his two kids that he almost ate a cicada. Little did he know then that more than ten years later he would release a full collection of rhymes and illustrations because of the near-insect-consuming incident in his first book for children called *I Ate a Cicada Today* (September 2014, Big Bound Books, LLC).

I Ate a Cicada Today features Crossan's own ink and watercolor illustrations – putting his experience as a cartoonist to work – alongside his fun animal rhymes like “I leapfrogged a warthog today/The doctor thinks I’ll be okay.” On the CD accompanying the book, Crossan plays acoustic guitar and sings the 16-verse song.

Crossan came up with several of the rhymes while eating with his kids at the restaurant the night the “dive-bombing cicada” hit him in the mouth. He scribbled them on a napkin, adding more verses soon after, but wasn’t sure what to do with such a comical and offbeat song. It wasn’t until years later that Crossan had the idea to turn the song into a children’s book using his drawing skills to produce the colorful and delightful illustrations.

The 32-page hardcover book with accompanying CD will have young readers laughing and singing along with each two-page spread featuring a verse about a different animal or insect and Crossan’s short spoken asides adding a comic punch to the zany lyrics.

Q&A with Jeff Crossan

Q: You’ve worked as a songwriter, cartoonist, and journalist-writing for newspapers and radio. Have you always wanted to be an author, too?

A: I remember wanting to be an author in first grade. In fact, I wanted to be a specific author – Dr. Seuss. I remember on my first visit to the school library another boy pulled *Horton Hatches the Egg* off the bookshelf, and I took one look at the cover illustration and thought, “I want that book.” I had to wait a whole week though for the chance to check it out when the other boy returned it. After that I collected all the Dr. Seuss books. I loved books as a kid. And I remember looking at all the books in that school library and thinking how great it would be to see my name on a book on one of those shelves.

Q: Where did you get the idea to turn “I Ate a Cicada Today” from a song into a children’s book?

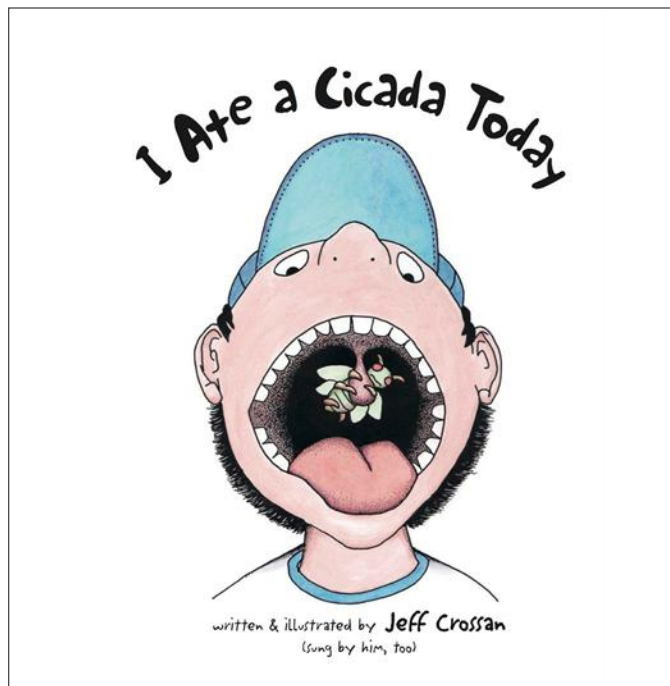
A: The song sat around gathering dust for several years. I had no idea what to do with it. I was writing country songs and, let’s face it, there aren’t many country acts out there looking for songs with a zillion verses about animals and insects. Then I started drawing cartoons for the *Presbyterian Voice* and one evening while I was working on a cartoon the thought just popped into my head, “Hey, I could take that crazy cicada song and turn it into a picture book.” I had more than enough verses to choose from – 30 or 40, I think. I picked 16 of my favorites and drew the cicada and leopard first.

Q: You’ve earned awards for writing country songs, including an Emmy nomination. How is writing a children’s song different?

A: There are a lot more animals and insects and a lot less drinking and cheating in a children’s song. Just kidding. Actually, they’re more similar than you might think. Both are usually straight forward in their narrative approach, not vague or open to interpretation like some other genres. But while country songs are usually rooted in reality, there were no boundaries for the imagination in the case of “I Ate a Cicada Today.” That made it a lot of fun to write.

Q: Did your kids help come up with any of the rhymes?

A: My kids are both very creative. My daughter is an artist, and my son is a songwriter. But they were just little kids when I started coming



up with ideas for the song in the restaurant. I was sitting across from them in a booth and every now and then I’d blurt out “I peppered a leopard” or “I thrilled a gorilla” or “I hid a giant squid,” any animal rhyme I could think of. They were just sort of amused by what I was doing as I recall. I don’t remember them trying to come up with ideas of their own. If they had, my son’s ideas would probably have all been dinosaur rhymes, and my daughter’s would have been about horses.

Q: *I Ate a Cicada Today* is humorous. Is your main goal with the book to make children laugh?

A: Yes. But I want parents and grandparents to laugh too. I hope the humor appeals to all ages. But laughter is the main goal. It’s not a conventional story book.

Q: Were you encouraged to be creative as a child? Why is that so important for youth?

A: I was given a lot of encouragement by my teachers to be creative. I still remember my first grade teacher, Mrs. Ferguson, showing a drawing I’d done in class to my mother and telling her she thought it would be a good idea to enroll me in art classes. So I started attending art classes at the Delaware Museum in Wilmington after school, which I wasn’t too thrilled about because I’d have much rather been outside playing with my friends. The lessons didn’t last very long though. One day when my mother asked the art teacher why I wasn’t bringing home any artwork she was told, “Well, Jeff spends almost all of his time just talking with the other kids.” Still, I remember how good it felt to have my work singled out for praise. A few years later, a poem I wrote about my dog was read aloud to my fifth grade class with the teacher saying, “This is the kind of writing you should all be trying to do.” That gave me a lot of confidence in my ability to write.

I think kids should be given the opportunity to explore all kinds of creativity so they can discover what they’re capable of while they’re young. I know a lot of folks who didn’t know they had a talent until they were much older and they always say they wish they’d gotten started earlier. ☺



Press Release: *The Forgotten Girl*

Kentucky writer delivers another “tense, cleverly plotted thriller.”

Jason Danvers intensely remembers the important people who have left his life. Logan Shaw, his best friend from high school, left town, and never came back after fighting with Jason on the eve of their graduation 27 years ago.

And Jason’s sister, Hayden, lost contact with their family years later as her life spiraled out of control with alcohol addiction.

“Jason Danvers is haunted by a couple of people who have disappeared from his life,” said *The Forgotten Girl* author David Bell. “He’s dealing with unanswered questions that extend all the way back to his high school days and are cropping up again in the present.”

In addition to being a novelist, Bell is an associate professor of English at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. He received an M.A. in creative writing from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a Ph.D. in American Literature and creative writing from the University of Cincinnati.

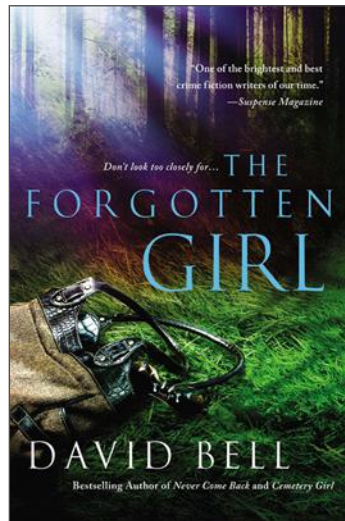
“I’ve been excited to hear a number of people say this book is the best one I’ve written so far. I’m currently writing a book a year in addition to teaching full-time at WKU, so it’s a challenge to get it all done.”

Back to the novel: Hayden suddenly reappears on Jason’s doorstep, clean and sober but desperate. She explains she has important personal business to attend to and implores Jason and his wife to temporarily take in her teenage daughter, Sierra. But Hayden doesn’t come back for the girl in 48 hours, as promised, and everyone worries that she has relapsed. Eventually her car is located—full of bloodstains—causing Jason to fear the worst. Little does he know how bad things will get.

When a body is discovered in the woods, the mysteries of Hayden’s life—and possible death—deepen. And one by one these events will shatter every expectation Jason has ever had about families, about the

awful truths that bind them, and the secrets that should be taken to the grave.

In *The Forgotten Girl*, David Bell has crafted another smart, suspenseful novel. □



Praise for the Novels of David Bell

The Forgotten Girl
“...tense, cleverly plotted thriller...”
—*Publishers Weekly*

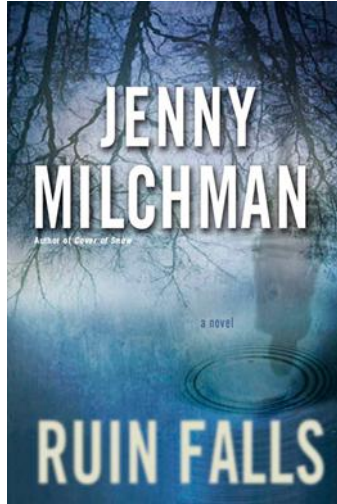
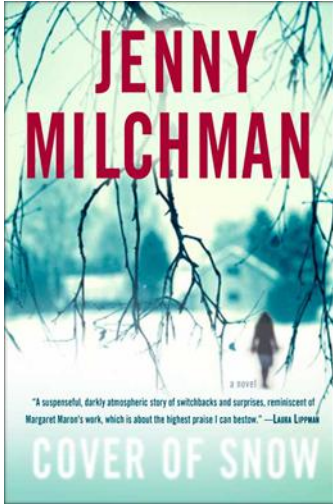
Never Come Back
“David Bell [has] established himself as one of the brightest and best crime fiction writers of our time...a definite page-turner....Bell, once again, has written an incredible, unique thriller that will have you hooked!”
—*Suspense Magazine*

The Hiding Place
“[Bell’s] book has lessons that will reverberate with the reader and remain after the conclusion is savored.”
—*The Louisville Courier-Journal*

Cemetery Girl
“A smasher. It twists and turns and never lets go, and...it could happen just this way.”
—Jacquelyn Mitchard, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Deep End of the Ocean*

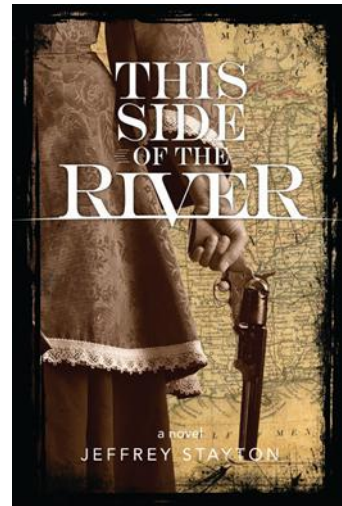
TOP: Photo by Victoria Taylor

Authors giving back:



Mystery novelist Jenny Milchman started the holiday Take Your Child to a Bookstore Day, which has grown with the help of book lovers, bloggers and her cross-country book tours to over 700 bookstores. An Indie Next Pick, bestselling, starred review author, Milchman releases her third novel *As Night Falls* from Ballantine on June 30.

Author Jeffrey Stayton created a Cheer for the Bookstores Cash Grant Contest that awarded six winning independent bookstores for their creative hard work. Stayton's debut southern grit lit novel, *This Side of the River*, releases February 15 from Nautilus Publishing.



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www.jkscommunications.com

The Language of Excellence by Tom Collins

By Gary Slaughter

Over the past fifty years, I've devoured dozens of leadership and management books. In fact, I've even written a number of them myself. I've also taught hundreds of leadership and management workshops to Fortune 500 corporate executives.

In my judgment, *The Language of Excellence* by Tom Collins is among the best five books I have ever read on this subject.

The other four include these classics:

- *The Motivation to Work* (1959) by Frederick Herzberg
- *The Practice of Management* (1954) by Peter Drucker
- *On Becoming a Leader* (1989) by Warren Bennis
- *The Transformational Leader* (1986) by Noel Tichy

Moreover *The Language of Excellence* replaced *One Minute Manager* on my "best five" list. OMM, written in 1982 by Ken Blanchard and Spenser Johnson, has sold over 13 million copies and been translated into 37 different languages. Despite OMM's popularity, *The Language of Excellence* is far more informative and easy to apply.

Below are the unique characteristics of Tom Collins and his book:

First and foremost, before writing this book, Collins has had more business experience, acquired wisdom, and success than 99 percent of the people working in American business today. This wisdom has not been attained solely through successes. As he states in the book's introduction, "I have been hired, fired, gone public, gone private, and been both acquirer and acquired."

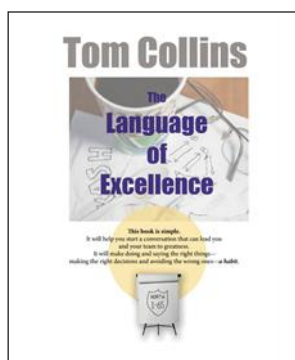
Collins' wisdom has resulted from being on the firing line. He has learned from hands-on experience. Unlike the best-selling authors mentioned above, Tom Collins does not have a "Doctor" before his name. He is not a product of academia. He is a pure practitioner of the profession of business. He was a business owner and thus a risk-taker, which exposes even the best of us to failure, from which, if we are strong and smart, we can learn to be even better leaders. And he has been extremely successful in doing just that.

The most appealing attribute of this book is that it is written in simple, understandable language. And it is organized to lead the reader through each and every step necessary to succeed in business. He hasn't missed a single essential element.

Furthermore the book is logically arranged in the following sections:

1. I-65 North: The Pursuit of Excellence
2. Change: The Path to Excellence
3. Management: Guidelines for Excellence
4. Opportunities: Strategies for Excellence
5. People: The Foundation for Excellence
6. Action: The Final Ingredient for Excellence

Perhaps the most original element of this book is the method used by Collins to parse these six sections into some 70 bite-size leadership and management concepts, cleverly labeling each of these concepts, and finally depicting the concepts in the form of an illustration or model inscribed on tiny flipcharts throughout the book.



By using this ingenious presentation of the book's wisdom, readers easily understand the words describing the concept and the concept's succinct and clever definition. Finally, by seeing concept depicted on a flipchart, readers immediately envision the concept in their minds.

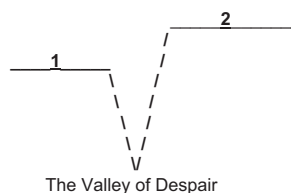
Here are the first two concepts contained in the second section, *Change: The Path to Excellence*.

Concept #1

The Label: *The Change Curve*

The Definition: *Change creates a sharp downward spike in performance or benefit before the objective can be reached -- the bigger the change, the bigger the downward spike.*

The Flipchart Illustration:



Note:

1. Starting Performance
2. New Higher Performance

Concept #2

The Label: *Managing Change: KASH*

The Definition: *The change curve will turn upward to achieve targeted benefits only through KASH. Those affected must gain new Knowledge which, when combined with the right Attitude, will result in acquiring necessary Skills that become Habit through use.*

The Flipchart Illustration:

KASH

Make no mistake, the organization and presentation of these ideas are simple, clearly understood, and easy to remember, but the concepts are far from trivial. They comprise a powerful and practical handbook of business wisdom and experience that only a highly successful business leader like Tom Collins could compile.

Most importantly, this is by far the easiest leadership and management book I've ever read. The proof? I immediately grasped the author's concepts as soon as I read their description. This is a rare quality in the majority of leadership and management books published today. My experience has found that most other books in this category are overly-complicated and unduly longwinded.

After reading this book, I told Collins that it was a good thing that he has retired from his business career to become an author, because this book tells all the secrets of business and management success -- secrets that took him a lifetime to learn. His former competitors and the rest of us can now benefit from his wisdom by applying his proven methods of thinking and acting to our own businesses -- or even to our personal lives.

For the benefit of the American economy, *The Language of Excellence* should be provided to every young man or woman just starting their business careers. It would save them from having to learn what Tom Collins has learned -- the hard way. ☐

"Tom Collins' *The Language of Excellence* just may be the only guide book to personal and business excellence you will ever need to read. Borrowing from a lifetime of achievement, Collins lays out clear guidelines that can help you find your own success while enabling you to offer others the same 'excellence' that has marked both his life and career. A must-read for achievers."

—Robert Hicks, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Widow of the South* and *A Separate Country*



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NSF Photographs from the studios of Jeff Frazier ...

NSF Photo Gallery Cast Credits & Photo Captions



According to Nashville Photographer Jeff Frazier's web site, "My camera is the window through which I build extraordinary friendships which in turn deepen my understanding and perceptions about the world and how it works."

This award-winning artist goes on to write that "myths and legends and folklore have always been a source of inspiration for me. We are all heroic figures in an epic story that is being played out every moment."

His inspiration is particularly apparent through the images he captures for the Nashville Shakespeare Festival, whose mission it is to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional Shakespearean experiences.

Jeff Frazier's NSF images continually appear throughout Middle Tennessee in print and via the web. Jeff's images have worked hand-in-hand with the words from many media writers who both preview and review the NSF's productions.

We here at *2nd & Church* have always been grateful for the opportunity to use Jeff's images in our pages. His photographs appear throughout this issue, specifically in our NSF Photo Gallery, located on pages 28 to 31. Listed below is the cast credits and photo captions used for this gallery. Thank you-Jeff-for all of your support. ☑

NSF Photo Gallery: Pages 28 to 31

Shakespeare's Case: Summer 2009. Featured are Nan Gurley, Denice Hicks, Brian Russell, and Jon Royal. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

The Taming of the Shrew: Shakespeare in the Park 2009 (featuring The Byron & Beth Smith Apprentice Company). Photo by Jeff Frazier.

The Tempest: Winter Shakespeare 2010. Denice Hicks as Ariel, Brian Russell as Prospero, and Jon Royal as Caliban. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

Much Ado About Nothing: Shakespeare in the Park 2012. Patrick Waller as Benedick and Evelyn O'Neal Brush as Beatrice. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare in the Park 2013. Andrew Gumm as Puck, Apolonia Davalos as Titania, and Nat McIntyre as Oberon. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

As You Like It: Shakespeare in the Park 2014. Amanda Card as Celia and Emily Landham as Rosalind. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

Macbeth: Winter Shakespeare 2013. Eric Pasto-Crosby as Macbeth and Shannon Hoppe as Lady Macbeth. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare: 2014. Bradley Brown, Christopher Cambell and Benjamin Reed. Photo by Jeff Frazier.



Cast Credits and photo Captions (this page)

LEFT: *Much Ado About Nothing*: Shakespeare in the Park 2012. Patrick Waller as Benedick, Evelyn O'Neal Brush as Beatrice, Steven Fiske as Claudio, and Emily Palmer as Hero. Photo by Jeff Frazier.

RIGHT: *Love's Labor's Lost*: Shakespeare in the Park 2010. Eric D. Pasto-Crosby as Berowne and Shannon L. Hoppe as Rosaline. Photo by Jeff Frazier.



VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



In Depth with Chef Sean Brock, James Beard Award Winner

Inside our Southern Food Issue's Pages

While our Southern Food issue will contain stories dealing with food and ingredients (and drink!) of The South, we will explore the documentation and infrastructure surrounding and supporting Her food and drink, as well: from cookbooks, recipes, and restaurants, to culinary libraries, archives, bookstores, and beyond!

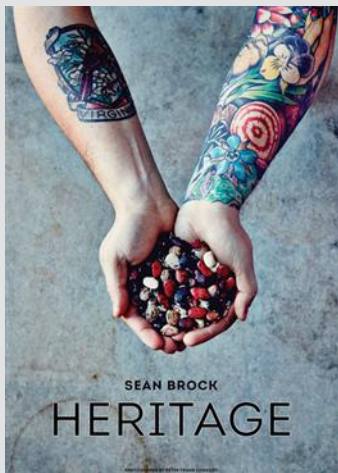
Cover Story/In Depth Interview with Chef Sean Brock.

Perhaps you have known that Chef Brock has been bringing back and growing crops that were on the edge of extinction. And of course, he's been an advocate for seed preservation, growing an assortment of heirloom crops. But did you realize that he studies and collects 19th century Southern cookbooks to educate himself on The South's food history and unearth new ways to revive antebellum cuisine? We'll be talking to him about all this and more! Additional pieces include:

- Feature story on Husk Nashville, located on Rutledge Hill in a complex of buildings dating back to the 1890s.
- In December, Parnassus Books and POP presented *An Evening with Chef Sean Brock*, who appeared in conversation with singer-songwriter Jason Isbell as part of his fall book tour for *Heritage*. We were at the event, reporting on it.
- Local writer Candace White reviews Chef Brock's book, *Heritage*. She'll be cooking a few of the recipes and writing a column about her adventures.

Feature Stories

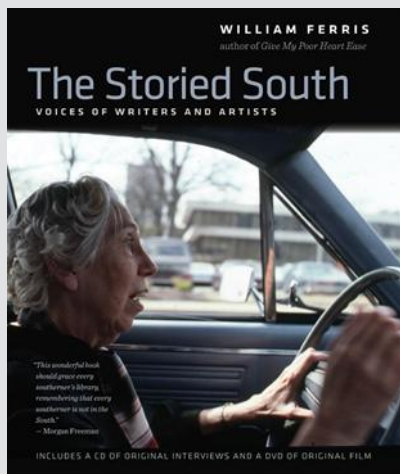
- We'll run a piece on the good work of South Carolina-based Anson Mills, advocates for heirloom grains...and so much more!
- There will be a story on The Mountain Heritage Literary Festival at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee.
- Local writer Katie McDougall explores the Southern Foodways Alliance's efforts to document Southern food.
- There will be a spread on Wild Fig Bookstore in Lexington, Kentucky.
- We've scheduled a story on the Southern Food & Beverage Museum (in New Orleans), focusing on the SoFAB Culinary Library & Archive and The Menu Project.
- We will publish something fun connected to *Southern Food: At Home, on the Road, in History*, by John Egerton
- Alongside the Cumberland Plateau of the Appalachian Mountains, the Lodge Manufacturing Company in South Pittsburg, Tennessee continues to do what it has been doing for over a century: forging both high quality cast iron and American jobs! Our writers and photographers will be heading there in 2015 to report back to our readers.
- Technical writer and motorcyclist Jennifer Eskew leads a motley crew across Kentucky's bourbon trail, cooking selections along the way from the book *Bourbon: a Savor the South® cookbook* by Kathleen Purvis.



Book Reviews

Of course, we're reviewing Chef Brock's new book, *Heritage*. But we have a lot of additional titles to share, spanning cookbooks, novels, and creative nonfiction titles. A few selections to look forward to are as follows:

- *Cornbread Nation 7*, edited by Francis Lam and John T. Edge
- *Okra: a Savor the South® cookbook*, by Virginia Willis
- Adrian Miller's *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time*
- *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists*, by William Ferris
- *The Cottoncrest Curse*, by Michael H. Rubin
- *One Year*, by Erin Walton...we mean, Mary McDonough
- *Strong Inside: Perry Wallace and the Collision of Race and Sports in the South*, by Andrew Maraniss
- Henry Chappell's *Silent We Stood*
- *Beesch: A Story of the Destiny of Honey Bees* by Ray Carpenter
- *The Historic Kentucky Kitchen*, by Deirdre Scaggs



LEFT: Sean Brock Photo by Andrea Behrends. ABOVE: Photo by Shannon Hall. To learn more about our Southern Food issue, find us online at 2ndandchurch.com

A Conversation with Denice Hicks

► From Page 19

DH: The mission of the Shakespeare Festival is to educate and entertain, and for each season I choose which of Shakespeare's 37 plays will best speak to our times and to the community. Some plays work equally well indoors or out, but some benefit from the more intense focus an indoor venue offers. *Hamlet*, for instance, our first Winter Shakes offering in 2008, is one of those. Hamlet's soliloquies are best in a quiet, intimate environment, where Hamlet can work through his dilemma while connecting with every audience member. There are other moments in the plays, Romeo's death—for instance, that shouldn't be interrupted by a helicopter hovering. Consequently, our seasons have been comedies in the summer and tragedies in the winter, but our partner teachers who bring students every year to Winter Shakes have requested the mercy of a comedy, and that's how *Twelfth Night* was selected for Winter 2015. *Henry V*, our summer 2015 offering, came about for a few reasons: 1. It's a fabulous play that we've not done, yet. 2. As far as we can see, there's not been a professional production of *Henry V* offered in Nashville. Ever. 3. And although there is a lot of comedy in it, it's a bit of a change from the comedies we've been doing the last several summers.

Choosing a favorite of Shakespeare's plays is really hard for me. I usually answer whichever one we're working on, but I think *The Tempest* is my all time favorite, for its poetry, its magic, and its message of hope and forgiveness.

RB: And how do you decide in which period to set a play? I loved the Depression-era setting of the summer's *As You Like It*. The 1930s camp look was so effective.

DH: Thank you! All of our conceptual ideas come from Shakespeare's text. For instance, *Much Ado About Nothing* begins with the men coming home from a war. Shakespeare is not specific about which war, but I saw the similarities in the behavior of the characters with the Hollywood version of the American boys coming home from the Second World War, and that's how our red, white, and blue musical *Much Ado* was conceived. The themes in *As You Like It* of people losing their homes and businesses and making the best of hard times took my imagination to our 1930s and the Depression. Some plays are place and time specific, like *Henry V*, which is very much about the conflicts between the English and the French. We'll be setting the production in a United States Civil War camp to enhance the relevance of the story and to educate people about how popular Shakespeare was in the 1800s in America. The soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians will be playing Shakespeare's story.

RB: Singer-Songwriter David Olney did a great job in *As You Like It*. What's the decision making process for choosing a production's music, both within the play and before a performance begins?

DH: One of the greatest resources we have here in Nashville is music. We have fantastic musicians, singers, and songwriters, and many of them appreciate the stories Shakespeare's plays tell. Music is as important to a play as the costumes, set, and lights are. All production values must help tell the story and give the audience context. David Olney had been attending our Shakespeare Allowed! readings at the public library for a few years and had expressed interest in acting, if the right role ever appeared. I'd already decided to do *As You Like It* in the summer of 2014 and had been considering the Great Depression-era and realized David was the perfect match for our production. When I pitched the idea to him, he jumped at the chance, cleared his touring schedule, and wrote a lot of fantastic songs that served the show. He was really fantastic in the role, and the music of that production was fantastic.

RB: It's now Winter Shakespeare time, and *Twelfth Night* is the eighth Winter Shakespeare production. Former Tennessee Titan star running back and Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George played the lead role in both *Julius Caesar* and *Othello*. Wow! How did that come

to pass?

DH: Eddie George turned to acting when he retired from the NFL, and after studying intensely for a few years was drawn to the power and challenge of Shakespeare's works. He asked me to work with his theater company (Actors by George) on some Shakespeare scenes, and recognizing his abilities, I encouraged him to audition for our 2012 production of *Julius Caesar*. He was cast and proved to be quite brilliant in the role. Teachers had been requesting a production of *Othello*, and it aligned with his schedule to return to our stage in 2014. I'm anxious to see what he'll do next and look forward to having him back on our stage the next time he is available.

RB: I cannot get *Othello* out of my mind. I left the Troutt Theater that winter stunned, and it wasn't because of the weather. I thought Jon Royal did an incredible job directing the production, and Eddie George was a brilliant selection. I know that NSF provides directors for school productions of the Bard's plays. Could you share some of the Educational Outreach work that the NSF does? Been doing that work for about 22 years, right?

DH: Professional theater artists are a great resource for a community, and I am anxious to get Nashville actors, directors, and designers into the schools as much as possible. In the early nineties we started touring hour-long versions of Shakespeare's most popular plays to the schools so that students could see and hear the poetry played by professional actors. Additional workshops were developed so that the students could then experience walking in the characters' shoes. Studying Shakespeare is important, seeing it performed is the best way to understand it, and playing the language is the best way to appreciate it. We offer workshops for businesses as well, with custom-designed sessions covering leadership, management, harassment, and diversity. Shakespeare brilliantly holds a mirror up to humanity, and every imaginable scenario can be found in his works.

RB: While the NSF has its Shakespeare in the Park and Winter Shakespeare productions, there always seems to be fun events spread throughout the year: the biggest balcony scene ever, 2014's Inaugural High School Shakespeare Festival, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged!)*, InsideOut of the LunchBox, Shakespeare and Songs at the Southern Festival of Books... Sometimes, when an organization prints "...and much more!" in its promotional literature, that's code for "the list is officially over." With the NSF, it actually means "and much more!" Where do all of these ideas come from? Do you all have monthly brainstorming sessions? Look at what other Shakespeare festivals are doing? Something else?

DH: A lot of what we do comes from the mother of invention: necessity. We needed a fun way to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday each year, and that's how Bardaroo (a Shakespeare-inspired concert), and the Biggest Balcony Scene Ever (just a flight of fancy I thought would be fun) were invented. The High School Shakespeare Festival came from my desire to bring different schools together in the name of Shakespeare to learn together and collaborate on a performance. The idea for a single show performed by several schools came from a drawing game I play with my son called, "exquisite corpse." Presenting Shakespeare is like cooking: you look at what you have and see what you can make. We happen to have access to wonderful ingredients with great poetry, versatile actors, talented musicians, and skilled teaching artists. No matter how we mix it, it's likely to turn out well.

RB: Back in May, I attended my first Shakespeare Allowed! event. I believe everyone was reading Shakespeare's *Pericles*. It's cool that you're able to have it in the Nashville Public Library. How did that get started? What's it all about?

DH: Shakespeare Allowed! came from a wish of a friend of mine who stated that he wanted to read all of Shakespeare's plays before he turned 40. The plays are much more fun to read with friends, and

A Conversation with Denice Hicks

reading them round-robin style requires no extra preparation while assuring everyone a lot of reading experience. I pitched the idea to the folks at the library, and they agreed—offering a lovely room on the third floor and promoting the program. After one of our dedicated participants wrote a moving article about his Shakespeare Allowed! experience for Salon.com, I got emails from around the world from people hoping to start similar programs in their communities. Moving the concept to The Room In The Inn came by request from the organization and from the fact that some homeless people had enjoyed the readings at the library.

RB: It was at that Saturday's reading of *Pericles* where Nashville Mayor Karl Dean announced that The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the University of Warwick had chosen the NSF as one of the few North American Shakespeare Festivals to visit as part of the Shakespeare on the Road project. (Congrats, by the way!) Could you share with our readers what that was all about? How did they like Shakespeare in the Park and everything that you all have going on here?

DH: Receiving the invitation to be one of only 14 Shakespeare presenters in North America included in the Shakespeare on the Road project was one of the greatest thrills of my career. The Birthplace Trust and U. of Warwick project is an exploration about why Americans produce and enjoy Shakespeare so much. They are interested in the American approach to the works and how we find relevance in the stories and adapt the plays to serve our own culture. They traveled all over the USA and Canada seeing shows, recording interviews, and taking photographs; then, they carried our promotional materials back to Stratford-upon-Avon to be archived in their permanent collection. The feedback we got from them about our very Americana *As You Like It* was great. They loved the way our audiences clapped and sang along, loved the setting, and said our *Rosalind*, Emily Landham, was one of the best they'd ever seen. The plaque they presented to us, made from a piece of wood from Shakespeare's Birthplace, will hang in an honored place as a remembrance of their wonderful visit.

RB: I always adore the photographs used to promote your productions. How has the experience been with the NSF's photographer, Jeff Frazier? What's the process like?

DH: Jeff Frazier is an exceptional artist and his extraordinary photography is an invaluable gift to the Shakespeare Festival. We always do the publicity photos right after we cast, long before rehearsals start. He and I sit down and talk about the play ahead of time—brainstorming possible compositions. June Kingsbury, our usual costume designer, prepares costuming for the shoot—sometimes she has the actual costumes already, other times she pulls “do-fers” that capture the look of the show. Aria Durso has been doing hair and make up for us for several years, and she usually helps with the photo shoots as well. On the day, we gather the actors, and Jeff goes to work. He works quickly, playfully, and intently. He has an amazing eye and is courageous about using interesting angles and active compositions. I like to avoid the stilted look of overly-staged photos, so we give the actors a certain scene or moment to play, and Jeff is crafty about catching real expressions. Then, what he does in post-production is what really sets our photos apart from other companies'. The photo shoots usually take place in NPT's Studio A, with

a blank wall behind them. Jeff chooses the background and other details and layers them in later. The results are always intriguing and gorgeous. Publicity photos are an important part of a company's identity, and Nashville Shakes is greatly honored to be the beneficiary of Jeff Frazier's art work.

RB: I'm curious about the actors and how they're organized. I've seen almost all of the NSF's performances since 1991. Always great, and I've wondered often if all the actors were local or if some came to Nashville to perform in a production. And what about the children? How do they get involved and introduced to the process?

DH: I believe that culture comes from within a community, and local art should be produced by local artists. Consequently, a top priority for NSF is to keep local artists employed. The actors and other artists who've chosen to live and work in Nashville are some of the country's best, so we're really not missing anything by not offering housing to out of town actors. We do welcome newcomers with open arms, so if someone is thinking of moving here, they can expect to get hired if they're right for a role. Nashville Shakes actors are a blend of union actors, non-union actors, and apprentice/intern/student actors, all local or who at least have some connection to Nashville.

RB: I've volunteered at Shakespeare in the Park for the last two summers. Not a lot. Just one night each summer, but it was easy, and I had a great time. I bet that if more people in the community volunteered for only one night, it would make a huge, positive contribution. How does volunteerism impact the NSF's mission?

DH: I can barely speak about our volunteers without weeping; they mean so much to the success of the company. We have such a small staff, but do such big events that we simply could not function without the help of dozens of people. It's important to the company that our volunteers are valued and appreciated and that they have fun whether they are helping strike a set, sell concessions, or collect donations. We also need year-round volunteers to do data entry and other office-oriented work. Being a volunteer for the Nashville Shakespeare Festival is a great way to make friends while making a difference in the community.

RB: Okay, I'm not trying to get into your business, but I would like to talk about money for a moment. I'm confident in saying that none of you are doing what you're doing for the cash. In fact, you don't even require an admission fee to each summer's Shakespeare in the Park. Right? But am I correct in thinking that the contributions that the NSF receives from the public during that event make possible everything else that we've talked about in this interview? How can people help support the NSF?

DH: We rely on our wonderful arts commissions (Metro and Tennessee), as well as on many local foundations such as the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, but quite a large portion of our operating funds comes directly from the community in response to our end-of-year letter, our spring request, and donation buckets at the Park. Many people sign up to give monthly via bank draft, which really helps our cash flow. When people experience Shakespeare in the Park or Winter Shakes or hear their children come home raving about doing a Shakespeare in Action workshop in school, they understand the value of Shakespeare to our culture and the Nashville Shakespeare Festival to the community. Maintaining the excellence of the experiences while keeping them affordable is a balancing act that grows easier by the year with more dedicated donors. The easiest way to donate is to go to the website nashvilleshakes.org and click on the “donate now” button. We are a very efficient company, and every dollar donated goes to good use.

RB: I suppose it's time to leave you alone now. Seriously, I know how busy you are and how hard you all work. Thanks for taking the time for this interview and for...suffering...through the process of this issue. It's been an interesting road, to be sure. Thanks for all that you and the Nashville Shakespeare Festival do for our city and community. ☺

Meet our Authors

A look at the folks who contributed to this issue of *2nd & Church*:

Dhwanie (Priya) Anand

Dhwanie (Priya) Anand is a graduate of Belmont University and The Writer's Loft at Middle Tennessee State University. She writes from her home in Hohenwald, Tennessee.

KB Ballentine

 kballentine.com

KB Ballentine has a M.A. in Writing and a M.F.A. in Creative Writing, Poetry. Her work has appeared in numerous journals and publications, including *Alehouse*, *Tidal Basin Review*, *Interrogang?!*, and *Touchstone*. In 2006, she was a finalist for the Joy Harjo Poetry Award and was awarded the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Prize in 2006 and 2007. *Fragments of Light* (2009) and *Gathering Stones* (2008) were published by Celtic Cat Publishing. In 2011, two anthologies published her work: *Southern Light: Twelve Contemporary Southern Poets* and *A Tapestry of Voices*.

Chuck Beard

 nashvillesheart.com  eastsidestorytn.com

Chuck Beard is a thinker by trade (will think for food; food for thought if you will), people observer-questioner/mental note-taker by habit (self-taught mind you), and curator of meaningless words searching for a dome near you. He works part-time at Oasis Center, is the editor for *Number.*, contributor for *Nashville Galleries Examiner*, a blogger, freelance writer, published author, and sole proprietor of East Side Story (Nashville's only all-local bookstore).

Bill Brown

Bill Brown just retired as a part-time lecturer at Vanderbilt University. He has authored five poetry collections, three chapbooks and a textbook. His three current collections are *The News Inside* (Iris Press 2010), *Late Winter* (Iris Press 2008) and *Tatters* (March Street Press 2007). Recent work appears in *Prairie Schooner*, *North American Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *English Journal*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Connecticut Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, and *Southern Humanities Review*. Brown wrote and co-produced the ITV series, *Student Centered learning* for Nashville Public Television. The recipient of many fellowships, he recently received the Writer of the Year 2011 award from the Tennessee Writers Alliance.

Gayle Edlin

 gcedlin.com/


Gayle Edlin excelled in undergraduate mathematics and chemistry but flourished in graduate studies in physics. Through an unlikely sequence of employment events, Gayle made her way into technical writing where she flourished ... at least on the surface. Technically satiated but creatively starving, Gayle stumbled across a writing group and seized the chance to join it. Sparks flew and before she knew it (i.e., five years later), Gayle finished her first novel, which she is now revising in preparation for seeking a publisher. Gayle also enjoys photography and takes frequent walks to indulge both this interest and her love of nature. She is seldom at a loss for words in the written form, but frequently stumbles over them in speech.

Cal Fuller

Cal Fuller is the Frank Novak Chair of Humanities and Director of Theater Programs at Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville. He is the author of "Lunging in the Dark: Blindness and Vision, Disappointment and Aspiration in Reynolds Price's Trilogy" and numerous book reviews for *Southern Quarterly* and theater reviews for *The Windy City Times*. He has also adapted Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Pirandello's *Nothing Serious* for

the stage.

River Jordan

 facebook.com/realriverjordan

River Jordan is the critically acclaimed author of four Southern literary novels filled with mystery and mystical suspense. Her most recent work is the best-selling non-fiction, *Praying for Strangers: An Adventure of the Human Spirit*. She travels the country speaking on *The Power of Story*, is a regular contributor to *Psychology's Today's Spirituality* blog, and is the host and producer of the literary radio program, *Clearstory* which airs from Nashville where she makes her home. Ms. Jordan is currently at work on a new novel, *The City of Truth* and a non-fiction book on *Labyrinths*.

Alvin Knox

 mtsu.edu/english/Profiles/knox.php

Alvin Knox received his MFA in Creative Writing--Poetry from Vermont College in 1999. Currently an Instructor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, he is one the founding mentors of MTSU's Writer's Loft program. His poems have appeared in various publications, including the *Southern Indiana Review*, *Algonquin*, *Frisk Magazine*, and *Tar Wolf Review*.

Rickey Chick Marquardt

 rickeychick.com

Rickey retired from law a few years ago. She holds a B.A. with Honors in Speech and Theater from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a J.D. from the Nashville School of Law. A Nashville native and lifelong supporter of the arts, she works full time advocating for the arts through writing, fundraising, and friend raising. Her philanthropy includes authorship of "St. Cecilia Academy 150 Year Commemoration 1860-2010" (Eveready Press 2011), which serves as an ongoing fundraiser for her alma mater. Currently her work includes promoting and volunteering with such notable arts organizations as The Nashville Shakespeare Festival; The Oxford Imps, Oxford, England; and The Musical Heritage Center, Pegrarn, TN.

Lynne McAlister

 lynnemcalister.com

Lynne McAlister's wide and varied interests have led her on a journey of learning, writing, and roaming. Having visited 49 states and 45 countries, she's written about travel, entrainment, and history primarily in London where she's spent much of her adult life. Now back home in downtown Franklin, Tennessee, she's rediscovering all that she missed about Nashville and the South.

Katie McDougall

 porchtn.org

Katie McDougall is the cofounder of The Porch, and she is author of the novel, *The Color Wheel*. Her short fiction has appeared in *BarcelonaReview.com*, *Storyglossia.com*, and in *Soundtrack Not Included*. She holds a B.A. in English from Colorado College and an MFA in Fiction Writing from Colorado State University. Prior to cofounding The Porch, Katie spent fifteen years as an English teacher in Colorado, Nashville, and The Bahamas.

Elsie Mosher

Elsie Mosher, retired, now in her eighties, a member of Pensters Writing Group, in Fairhope, Alabama, has written since childhood: essays of experiences and poetry of self-expression--savoring treasured memories. Some prizes along the years keep "her moving fingers writing and moving on!"

Jennifer Palley

Jennifer Palley is *2nd & Church's* first foreign literary correspondent. She is an Edmonton, Canada, native living in Stockholm, Sweden, for the past 16 years. Jennifer is a freelance writer and editor, and her portfolio includes a variety of assignments, everything from writing online help to editing Biblical literary texts.

Mary Popham

Mary Popham is a lifelong Kentuckian whose fiction, nonfiction, poetry, essays, and book reviews have appeared in the *Courier-Journal*, *ForeWord Reviews*, *Appalachian Heritage*, and *The Louisville Review*. She has produced short plays and published short stories in anthologies, holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University, and is an active member in two Louisville writers groups. In the fall of 2013, she had an essay published in *This I Believe: Kentucky*; and in 2014 had a novel published by MotesBooks. She is currently writing a collection of short fiction.

Terry Price

🏠 terryprice.net

Terry Price is a Tennessee writer, born in Nashville, about a half of a block from where he currently works. He has his MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University in Louisville and is a mentor in, and Director Emeritus of, The Writer's Loft creative writing program at Middle Tennessee State University (now known as MTSU Write). His work has appeared in the online magazine *NewSoutherner.com* and in their print anthology, *Best of New Southerner*, as well as in *Writers Notes* magazine, the online journal *BloodLotus*, and the *Timber Creek Review*, and he has had a story nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Suzanne Craig Robertson

Suzanne Craig Robertson has been editor of the *Tennessee Bar Journal*, a statewide legal publication, for more than two decades. In the course of this work, she has written about members of the state and federal judiciary, recovering alcoholics and drug addicts, lawyer-missionaries, low-income people in need of legal services and those who helped them, pioneer women who broke through glass ceilings, and more. She received her bachelor's of science degree in communications/public relations from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, a certificate in creative writing from The Writer's Loft (MTSU Write) at Middle Tennessee State University, and has been a workshop participant at the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference in Grapevine, Texas.

Julie Schoerke

🏠 jkscommunications.com

In 2000, Julie Schoerke founded JKSCommunications, a book publicity firm in New York, Chicago, Nashville, and Denver. The firm represents traditionally published books with "The Big Five" and is the publicity firm of record for several boutique-publishing houses, and it sometimes publicizes hybrid and self-published books. JKSCommunications is proud to represent books that have received scores of awards and several who have become *New York Times*

best-sellers. Julie speaks nationally about book promotion and the changing tides of the book industry including appearances at University of Chicago, Decatur Book Festival, Oxford Creative Non-Fiction Workshop, Highlights Foundation, Southern Festival of Books, Alabama Book Festival, and others. She also is a frequent guest on radio programs to discuss literary topics.

Luke Seward

Luke Seward is a Louisville based photographer currently completing a BFA in photography at the Hite Art Institute, University of Louisville. Seward is managing documentation of all public art works within the Louisville Metro Government through the Commission on Public Art. His work is presently on display at Spot5 Art Center in the Clifton area of Louisville, Kentucky. "Finding myself in the midst of a constant concrete jungle drove me to seek refuge behind a lens. While lurking through the streamline of urban environments I found myself stepping outside its systemic nature to observe. I find an appreciation for my surroundings by taking time to slow down, compose, and capture. Pumping the breaks in a fast paced world allows me to soak up the little details we are surrounded by, permitting me to find truth and authenticity within scenes carefully composed."

Gary Slaughter

Gary Slaughter is the author of the award-winning *Cottonwood* series, five novels set on the World War II home front during the last five seasons of the War. Prior to becoming a novelist, Slaughter owned and operated a number of Information Technology (IT) service corporations. Over the years, he became a recognized authority in IT executive development, process improvement, and restructuring of large-scale commercial and government IT organizations. He has authored dozens of IT books, white papers, and articles. Individuals who have attended his speeches and seminars number in the thousands, including top IT executives in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Slaughter is a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Business Administration.

Candace L. White

Candace White is a mountain girl born at the foot of the Blue Ridge in North Carolina. She grew up near a cotton mill town on her Granny's farm where stories and the tellin' of them were Saturday night entertainment in the front yard as the sun set and the cool air, soft with the scent of flowers, crept from the pine woods. A chorus of tree frogs from down at the creek provided a background cadence to the spoken words of relatives and friends who had just stopped by for cake, coffee and visitin'. In this place of mountain laurel and bubbling creeks that sprang from artesian wells, a mountain child with bare dirty feet learned to live in the world. Candace tells this story in her creative non-fiction novel that is nearly complete and refers to it often on her blog and in her cookbook that shares the food and wisdom that she inherited from the women who raised her up.

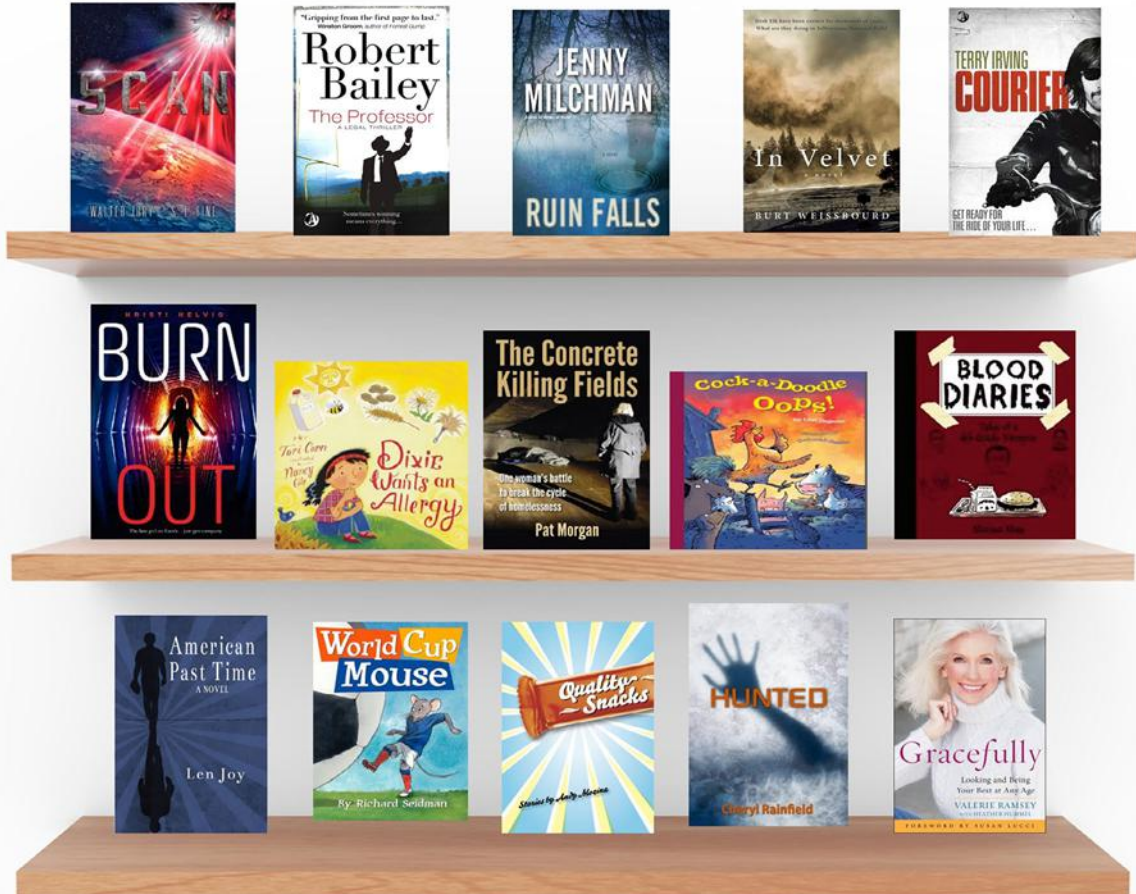
Ray Zimmerman

Ray Zimmerman is the Executive Editor of *Southern Light: Twelve Contemporary Southern Poets* and a former president of the Chattanooga Writers Guild. He produces poetry readings and spoken word events in Chattanooga, and Ray was the subject of a feature article in *Blush* magazine.



Photo by Gayle C. Edlin

We salute the tireless champions of the written word:
2nd & Church, authors and bookstores



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JKSCommunications is a full-service literary publicity firm, founded in 2000, with offices in New York, Chicago, Nashville and Denver. We represent books and authors with major publishers, boutique publishers and indie publishers, as well as select self-published authors.

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